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A
D E F E N S E
O F S O M E
Important Doctrines
O F T H E
G O S P E L,
In T W E N T Y S I X
S E R M O N S.

Most of which were PREACHED in
L I M E - S T R E E T.

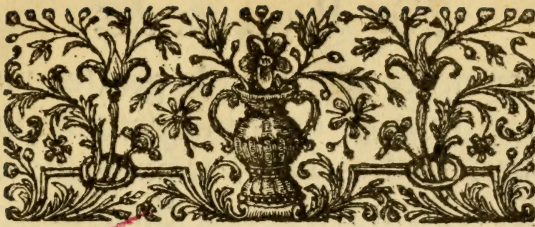
By several MINISTERS.

In T W O V O L U M E S.

V O L. I.

L O N D O N :

Printed for A. W A R D, at the King's-Arms, and
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P R E F A C E.



W H E N doctrines of pure revelation are opposed, it is the duty of all who believe them, to appear in their defense ; and this is really engaging in a noble cause : It is standing up for the honour of the great God, against those who set their imperfect reason, and proud conceits, above infinite wisdom : To strive for the faith once deliver'd to the saints, is most necessary, when it meets with the contradiction of sinners. As

error never raged with greater violence than it does in our unhappy times, and as lukewarmness never discover'd it self more, than in the present day of darkness, it never could be more expedient than now, to plead for the glorious gospel of the blessed God. The sufficiency of the light of nature is warmly contended for, by such as do not profess to reject revelation ; and most of the doctrines of scripture have been given up, one after another, by some who yet declare that the Bible is their religion. It is therefore now time, if ever, for those who see no reason to renounce the old Protestant doctrines, the glory of the Reformation, to bear their testimony against the errors of the day, and to stand up for the great truths, which have been handed to them by their fathers, and which they embrace, not merely because they have received them
from

from the worthies who have gone before them, but because, after strict and impartial examination, they find, that these, and no other, are the doctrines reveal'd in scripture.

Near two years since, some Gentlemen, who, it is to be hoped, have a true zeal, and a hearty concern, for the interest of Christ, judg'd it proper to set up a Lecture*, for one winter and spring season, that a course of Sermons might be preach'd, in defense of several truths, which they reckon'd to be of the last importance, and which are, in our time, violently opposed. Nine Ministers, who were chose for this work, cheerfully undertook it. When this course was finish'd, it was the unanimous desire of the Gentlemen, that they would print

* This Lecture was begun at the Meeting in Lime-street, where the Reverend Mr. Bragge statedly preaches, on November 12, 1730. and was continued weekly till April 8, 1731.

their Sermons ; with which request they have complied, hoping to do some service, if it is only by establishing wavering minds in the great doctrines which are now matter of contest.

These Discourses we now submit to the candid perusal of serious and judicious persons. We have not enter'd upon the direct proof of the truth of our holy religion, because it was not our design to engage with proper Deists, but with erroneous professors of Christianity. The great doctrines of the blessed Trinity, and of the Person of Christ, we have not meddled with ; seeing several of us have treated largely upon them before, and our labours are in many hands. Some thoughts which we had not time to deliver from the pulpit, we have taken the liberty to add. The bodily indispositions of some of our number, which ended in death, as to one,
who

who was a real credit to the cause, have occasioned a much greater delay in publishing this work, than was apprehended, when it was first put to the press, which is near a year since.

We can each of us say, as to our selves, that we have advanced nothing but what we believe to be true, and agreeable to scripture. If any, with meekness, gravity, and impartiality, shall think fit to object against what we have laid down, we hope, we shall be enabled, by the Holy Spirit, to plead for the things of God ; being desirous of nothing more than to establish the truth, as it is in Jesus : But if any should pursue us with rancour and reviling, with banter and grimace, we shall pass by such treatment with pity and silence : Or, should they, who shall be disposed to animadvert upon what we have deliver'd, in the following Sermons, charge upon
us

us the sentiments of particular persons, we shall leave those concern'd to vindicate their own tenets.

We recommend the whole of what we have done to the blessing of that good Master, for whose glory we plead, and whose battles we fight : And we would humbly hope that our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, the word of whose patience we desire to keep, and in defense of which we now appear, will make our endeavours to be of real service, to establish pious persons in the belief of the doctrines in dispute, and to furnish them with some weapons, to repel the attacks of gain-sayers.

June 13,
1732.



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*The Spirit's Standard lifted up and
display'd against Error.*

I N A
S E R M O N
O N

ISAIAH lix. 19.

By ROBERT BRAGGE,
Minister of the Gospel,



VOL. I.

B



ISAIAH lix. 19.

*When the enemy shall come in
like a flood, the Spirit of the
Lord shall lift up a standard
against him.*

IT is a glorious truth, which reflects light on the whole gospel, and adds lustre to all the works of God; that whatever God doth, or suffers to be done, be it in the church, or in the world, is for the manifestation of his own glory. To this great end, that his glory may shine forth the brighter, his works of nature are made to subserve his designs of love and grace; the first Adam, at the head of this lower creation, was but the figure of him that was to come. Dark and dismal as the veil is, sin hath spread over all nations, and great as the confusion is, which it hath hurl'd quite round the

B 2

globe,

The Spirit's Standard lifted up

globe, all in the end will be so over-rul'd, as to be an eternal illustration of the glory of God, as it shines forth in the face of Jesus Christ. The scattering caused by sin would not have been suffer'd, but to make way for the gathering together of the whole election of the Father's grace, in a far more glorious Head. Of which you read ^a, "That in the dispensation of fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." Full as hell is of darkness, the glory of God's vindictive justice shines brightly therein; and full as the enemies are of wrath, be they men, or devils, all their wrath shall be made to praise God.

I shall not consider these words in their connexion; so to do, would take up too much of your time: but, in speaking to them, I shall observe the following method.

- I. Who the enemy is the text speaks of, shall be my first enquiry.
- II. Why the enemy is at any time suffer'd to come in like a flood, shall be my next.
- III. I shall let you see how remarkably the Spirit of the Lord hath all along lifted up a standard against them.

^a Eph. i. 10.

IV. I shall produce the standard which we, who are set for the defence of the gospel, should, as enabled by the Spirit, be now lifting up.

V. Who the present enemy is, which threatens to come in like a flood, shall be my last enquiry: And so I shall acquaint you with the design of this Lecture; and conclude with the joint request of your Lecturers.

I. I shall begin with the first of these; which is to tell you, who the enemy is, my text speaks of.

The truly gracious, of any denomination, are not to be number'd among the enemy. These may differ among themselves, and labour under mistakes about less matters; but being one Spirit with the Lord, they are enabled, whereunto they have attain'd, to walk by the same rule. Being taught of God, they are brought to acknowledge every good thing in Christ, that is to be found in one another; according to that golden rule, which regulates the communion of saints^b, "That the communication of thy faith may become effectual, by the acknowledging of every good thing, which is in you in Christ Jesus." Was

^b Phil. 6.

this rule of Christian fellowship more observ'd, we should differ without falling out. The unity of the Spirit would be preserv'd, at another rate than it is, in the bond of peace; neither would the people of God kindle fire on earth, or call for fire from heaven to devour one another. Neither babes, nor men, nor fathers in Christ, are the enemies my text speaks of; but the seed of the serpent are; who, in numberless instances, have discover'd, and are still discovering their bitter enmity against the seed of the woman. The people of God, whose New Testament name is that of the saints, and faithful in Christ Jesus, have all along had their enemies. Righteous Abel had a cruel enemy, bloody Cain. Thus the patriarch Jacob had a fierce enemy, profane Esau. Jacob, to be sure, took a wrong step to obtain the blessing; who was suffer'd thus to come at it, that it might appear he deserved it no more than did profane Esau; who discover'd the plague and enmity of his heart, by resolving on the death of his brother. Thus Israel, under the Old Testament, had many and fierce enemies; there was Pharaoh, king of Egypt, with his cruel counsellors; there was Goliath of Gath, with his Philistines; there was Sennacherib, king of Assyria, with his railing Rabshakeh; there was Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, with
many

many more. Their own idolatrous kings were some of Israel's worst enemies ; who were so outrageously wicked, as not only to lay aside the worship of the true God, but to place their idols in his temple : the calves at Dan and Bethel were very provoking ; but idols in the temple it self were more so.

The top instance of the enmity which lives and reigns in the seed of the serpent, is the treatment which Christ and his apostles met with, in the fulness of time, among the Jews, and wherewith his gospel and witnesses are still treated. One would have thought, that, considering who Christ was, and on what kind errand he came, he should have had no enemy, especially among his own : the prophecies relating to the sufferings of the Messiah, were as unlikely to have had their accomplishment, as that of the kings of Europe, their consenting to give away their power to the beast : but accomplish'd they were, which is a wonderful proof of the truth of the Christian religion. Never had any more enemies, nor fiercer, than Christ had. They who waited for the consolation of Israel, were his friends ; but how few were they ? The rest, from them that sate in the gate, to them that deserved the stocks, were his enemies : he was the song of drunkards, as well as the envy of the

Sanhedrim. His brethren did not believe in him, which was a plain proof he was no cheat ; for had he been so, to be sure his brethren would have been let into the secret, and his near kinsfolks went forth to take him ; he passed for an enemy to Cæsar among the rulers, and for a mad-man among his relations.

Thus his apostles, during the course of their ministry, had their enemies ; few died a natural, but most a violent death ; sealing the testimony they bore to the truth, as it is in Jesus, with their blood. How was persecuting Saul persecuted, when he came to be a Christian ? Hell soon turn'd the tables upon him, and was in an uproar against him. Thus the primitive saints had their enemies, both at Rome and at Jerusalem, and every where else. Where-ever the seed of the woman had any footing, the seed of the serpent sent out a flood of persecution to destroy them. Witness the ten bloody persecutions under Rome Pagan ; which have been out-done by Rome Anti-christian : the dragon fill'd himself with the blood of the saints ; but the scarlet whore hath often made her self drunk therewith. In the massacre at Paris, she drank the blood of an hundred thousand Protestants ; and of three hundred thousand in that of Ireland ; and of a million in that great persecution
of

of the Waldenses, and of the Albigenfes. How did ſhe begin to glut her ſelf with Engliſh blood, during the ſhort reign of bloody queen Mary? Our civil rites, as Engliſhmen, have all along had their enemies: how forward were many, during the reigns of king Charles and of king James, to have introduced ſlavery, as well as popery? And are there not ſtill among us ſome who would be glad was the prince abſolute, and the clergy independent? Hath the reformation no enemies among us? Are all dead and gone who hate to be reformed? Hath the Revolution no enemies? The Proteſtant ſucceſſion in the royal houſe of Hanover no enemies? It was to be wiſh'd they had none; but enemies, to be ſure, they have; though, bleſſed be God, their numbers leſſen, as light encreaſeth.

Thus the doctrines of the goſpel have all along had, and ſtill have, their enemies. The doctrine of the Reſurrection had ſo; of which number were Hymeneus and Philetus, who ſaid it was paſt already^c. And ſo had the doctrine of Chriſt's true and proper divinity, of his incarnation, of his ſatisfaction, of his imputed righteouſneſs, and of his efficacious grace. Thus much may ſuffice, by way of answer to the firſt enquiry.

^c 1 Tim. i 20.

II. My next enquiry is this ; why is the enemy suffer'd, at any time, thus to come in like a flood ? To which I answer, in six things.

I. It is for the manifestation of his glory, who works all things after the counsel of his own will, thus to suffer it ; who can and will bring glory to himself, even praise, which is the top of glory, out of all the instances and attacks of the enemies wrath^d, “ The wrath of man shall praise thee ; ” which holds as true of the wrath of devils. Had not Christ, the seed of the woman, been an over-match for Satan, one abundantly able to bruise his head, the old serpent had not been suffer'd to enter paradise, nor to tempt our first parents, and least of all to prevail : but super-creation grace would have interposed ; for to be sure, that grace, whence is our recovery by Christ the second Adam, could have prevented our fall in the first. Was not the King of saints able to cast the man of sin, as a millstone, into the sea of God's judicial wrath, to rise up no more for ever, Anti-christ had not been suffer'd to shew himself, and much less to wear a triple crown at Rome. The doing of which will out-shine Israel's deliverance out of Egypt, and Pharaoh's being drowned in the red sea ; by this Christ will get

^d Psal. lxxvi. 10.

unto himself a glorious name of praise, and be eternally exalted; whose glory, as Man and Mediator, will be but the greater, in God's salvation, for all the opposition it meets with from the enemy. It is with Christ, the Sun of righteousness, as it is with the natural sun; we may darken our houses, and shut out the light, but cannot darken the sun: should all eyes be put out, the sun would remain as full of light as ever; the seeing eye adds nothing to the shining sun, that is the same whether the horizon be full of clouds, or without them: its light and heat are but the more manifested and recommended, by our winter seasons, and long nights.

2. It is also for the trial and exercise of all his people's graces that this is suffer'd. As the cash of the nation should not be lock'd up, nor hoarded, but traded with; so the graces of the Spirit are talents of such worth and usefulness, that God will not have them hid in napkins. Untry'd faith is uncertain faith, which holds true of the rest of our graces. Had not Abraham's faith been try'd, he had not been call'd, in the word of God, the father of the faithful, an higher title than his being the father of many nations, or Adam's being the father of all mankind. The trials and temptations of the people of God cannot be set in a sweeter light than they are,
by

by the apostle Peter^c, “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations. That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” Faith alone, because of its usefulness, is here mentioned; but all other graces are, doubtless, included. How shall the followers of the Lamb be brought off more than conquerors in the end, if they meet with no enemies in the way? Faith’s victories suppose a field of battle; a flesh lusting against the Spirit, a tempting world, and a raging devil. Mean and contemptible, as the followers of the Lamb are, in the eye of the world, they will out-shine all its Cæsars in the day of Christ’s appearance. Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, will be their tribute of praise above in glory; for none in heaven sacrifice to their own net, nor burn incense to their own drag; but shout grace, grace, and will do so for ever.

3. It is to rouse and awaken the wise virgins that this is suffer’d; who, in slumbering and sleeping with the foolish, act below their character, as they are God’s witnesses, and God’s remembrancers; who

^c 1 Pet. i. 6, 7.

are to buy the truth, as it is in Jesus, at any rate, but to part with it for no price : they are also to give the most high no rest, until he so establish Jerusalem, as to make it the praise of the whole earth. Now a sleepy, drowsy, lukewarm, indifferent frame ill becomes persons who are placed by God in so high a post, on whose diligence and watchfulness so much depends.

4. This is suffer'd, that the followers of the Lamb may take unto themselves the whole armour of God. No piece of which can well be spared ; neither the girdle of truth, than which nothing is more dreaded by the father of lyes ; nor the breast-plate of righteousness, that is, of Christ's imputed suretyship righteousness, which defends and screens the heart from the thunders of the law, as a broken covenant, and from the lashes of conscience for the breach thereof : neither can the saint's shoe be any more miss'd, than the saint's breast-plate ; for the gospel of peace, received in the love of it, promotes practical godliness, more than all the thunders of Sinai. And as for the shield of faith, we all need to be farther taught how to manage it : it is among our graces like the sun among the planets ; neither can we, who are as brands pluck'd out of the burning, be without the helmet of salvation, or lay aside the sword of the Spirit, which is the

Word

Word of God; because we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, and with spiritual wickednesses in high places; with the rulers of the darkness of this world, who sit at the helm at Rome, at Constantinople, in the East and West-Indies.

5. This is suffer'd to put those who are one spirit with the Lord, upon looking up for a fresh anointing. Your having had him as the former rain, in your regeneration, should encourage you to ask, and to expect him, as the latter rain, to the end of life: who, as certainly as he hath laid the first, will bring forth the top-stone with shouting, not the Arminian shout of free will, but that of free grace unto it. To war as well as to worship in the Spirit, is what all the followers of the Lamb are called to: Satan is sure of victory whenever you go forth against him in your own spirits; a look unto Christ, your Head, for a fresh anointing is of the utmost consequence, when we are called forth to battle.

6. I may add, this is suffer'd, to baffle and confound the enemy, who have missed the mark, as oft as they have bent their bow, and shot their arrows. Thus they missed it, in putting Pharaoh upon destroying the males in Israel, as soon as born; for then was Moses, Israel's deliverer, born, who had not been took up by
Pha-

Pharaoh's daughter, and educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, had not his parents been forced to expose him. Never was Satan more desirous to accomplish any thing than the death of Christ; who, by dying, destroyed him that hath the power of death, who is the devil: where the enemy hoped to have triumphed over him, he spoiled them; whose cross proved their overthrow, and his resurrection their entire defeat. Thus in the pit which they dug for Christ, were their own feet taken.

III. I shall now give you some memorable instances of the enemies coming in like a flood; and let you see how victoriously the Spirit of the Lord hath, all along, lifted up a standard against him.

I. How like a flood did the gates of hell come in upon all mankind, when the old serpent had artfully drawn our first parents into sin? Then, if ever, was there joy in hell; but hell's joy was but like a flash of lightning; for in the evening of that dark and gloomy day, did the glorious light of the gospel first break forth. That the old serpent was by when the threatening was pronounced, is very manifest, he being the first that was sentenced: to whom the first promise, if it was understood by him, must have been like a clap of thunder, before which he fell; who, as he had gain'd his

his point, so he was to receive his death's wound, by the instrumentality of a woman; for it was her seed; and not the man's, that was to bruise his head. The standard of the first promise virtually contained in it all after-promises; for the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ, are all three plainly hinted at, and foretold thereby; his incarnation, in his being called the seed of the woman, who was to be born of a virgin; his death and sufferings, by which his heel is most aptly and elegantly said to be bruised; his resurrection and victory, by which he effectually bruis'd the serpent's head.

2. How like a flood did the enemy come in, first in oppressing, and then in pursuing Israel? That Israel's name might be extinguished, Israel's males were order'd to be drowned, as soon as born; and though God had, by an high hand of power, deliver'd his people out of Egypt, Pharaoh resolv'd to pursue, with a prospect of overtaking and dividing the spoil: but how awful, as well as remarkable, was the standard which the Spirit of the Lord lifted up against Pharaoh, and his host, by drowning them in the red sea? who were first infatuated, and so destroy'd.

3. How like a flood did the Assyrians come in against Judah? Their defended cities were taken, and Jerusalem besieged by an
army

army of an hundred and fourscore and five thousand men, all full of rage and rancour against Israel, if any judgment may be form'd of them by Rabshakeh's railing letter. But good Hezekiah, instead of returning railing for railing, gave himself to prayer; in answer to which, the Spirit of the Lord lifted up such a standard, as effectually brought about Israel's deliverance; for the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote; in one night; an hundred and fourscore and five thousand of the Assyrians.

4. How like a flood did the enemy come in, in the reign of king Ahasuerus? when wicked Haman resolv'd, by way of revenge, on the destruction of all the Jews; not only they in Shushan were to be kill'd, both young and old, little children and women, in one day; but they from India to Ethiopia, even all that were to be found residing in any part of the king's dominions, who reigned over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces. But how remarkable was the standard which the Spirit lifted up against him? Wicked Haman was hang'd on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai; and the Jews every where were victorious over their blood-thirsty enemies, of whom they slew seventy five thousand.

5. How like a flood did the enemy come in, in that hour of darkness, of which

Christ speaks ^f, “ But this is your hour, and the power of darkness ? ” In it the enemy got Christ betrayed, denied, and crucified, and to make all sure, requested Pilate that the grave might be secured ; accordingly they set a watch, and sealed the stone. But how glorious was the standard which the Spirit lifted up in the early resurrection of Christ ? “ Behold there was a great earthquake ; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it ; his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow ; and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.”

6. In the ten bloody persecutions raised by Rome Pagan, Satan came in like a flood, hoping to crush the church in its infancy ; but such and so glorious was the standard which the Spirit, in those early days, lifted up against him, that the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church. As in Egypt, the more the Israelites were oppressed, the more they multiplied ; so the primitive Christians propagated the gospel, by their sufferings for it ; the patience they acted, and their praying for their persecutors, overcame

^f Luke xxii. 53.

^g Matt. xxviii. 2, 3, 4.

many of them; and the sealing their testimony with their blood made their testimony but the more regarded.

7. How like a flood did the enemy come in, in the rise and progress of Antichrist, who is drawn and described to the life in the prophecies of the New Testament? Hardly a circumstance of any consequence is there omitted, from the word mystery, writ on his forehead, to his making merchandize of the souls of men. But how glorious and successful was the standard which the Spirit lifted up in the Reformation? though the man of sin was then in his height of power, saying, in his heart, he should never be moved; the first reformers were in Christ's hand an over-match for him, by whose ministry he received such a wound, as will never be healed.

8. To conclude this head. A little before Satan's binding, and immediately after his being loosed, he is to come in like a flood. A little before his binding, he is to come in like a flood in latter day darkness; of which you have a very humbling account^h, "This know, that in the last days perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, dis-

^h 2 Tim. iii. 1, &c.

The Spirit's Standard lifted up

obedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof;" and likewise in getting the witnesses slain, who are the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus; such as bear their testimony against error to the truth, as it is in Jesus, who are to prophesy in sackcloth, during the long reign of Antichrist; towards the close of which, the beast out of the bottomless pit is to make war with them, and to overcome and kill them; and the dead bodies are to lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified: which great street seems to me to be Europe, which is the most trading, populous, and improv'd part of the first Adam's world, which is the great city that is deservedly called Sodom and Egypt, into which Christ was born, and in which he was crucified. But how glorious is the standard which the Spirit, in those last days, will raise up against the enemy; of which you read ⁱ, "After three days and an half, the Spirit of life from God enter'd into

ⁱ Rev. xi. 11.

them; and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them that saw them; and the same hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell." Rome's downfall seems to be the immediate consequence of their resurrection; which is followed by latter day glory^k,
" And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ."

After Satan is loosed, he will be suffer'd to come in like a flood; which will be his last effort, and, of consequence, his fiercest and boldest onset; of which you read^l,
" When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth, (where America, which is the fourth quarter of the earth, is plainly pointed at) Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea: and they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." By which fire, it's highly probable, the first Adam's world will be burnt up; of which the

^k Rev. xi. 15.

^l Chap. xx. 7, &c.

The Spirit's Standard lifted up

apostle Peter speaks^m; for, in the close of this chapter, you have an account of judgment, and of the perdition of ungodly men; and, at the beginning of the following chapter, of a new heaven, and of a new earth.

IV. I shall next observe what the standard is, which we, who preach the gospel, should now be lifting up.

1. Negatively. Not the standard of a Plato, nor of a Seneca, which is that of carnal reason, supported by philosophy, and varnish'd over with a shew of morality; which can no more supply the place of the gospel, than the dim light and shine of the moon and stars can supply the place, or make up for the want of the light and warm beams of the sun. Though the mind of man was originally the candle of the Lord, it is blown out by sin into a stinking snuff: witness the stench of idolatry and superstition the world hath for so many ages past been filled with. Neither is the standard, we should lift up, that of Antichrist; which is fire and fagot, with all the instruments of cruelty, which a raging devil could invent, or a bloody inquisition make use of; who, in making converts, prove themselves to be none of Christ's disciples, who came not

to destroy mens lives, but to save them. Rome's cruelties are the reverse of Christ's bowels. Neither is the standard we are to lift up, that of Mahomet, whose weapons were carnal, and not spiritual; such as flattery, and the force of arms, polygamy, and a carnal paradise; who, instead of foretelling sufferings, promised victory; and, instead of working miracles, was full of debaucheries. Neither is the standard we are to lift up, that of the Jews; which is that of fables, and romantick traditions, of which their Talmud, and other writings, are full; who, though they have the Old Testament entire, and the free use thereof, yet it is to them as a sealed book, the veil of their hearts not being taken away. This they kept for us, as we do the New Testament for them. In a word, the standard we are to lift up, is not that of any party, in opposition to Christ, whose written word is the touch-stone of all we preach, and of all we print. To this one and only standard of truth, and warrant of the reformation, we are ready to bring all our sermons, confessions, catechisms, and bodies of divinity: by this we endeavour both to preach and to pray, to walk and to worship.

2. Having thus return'd a negative, I shall return a positive answer to this great enquiry; what is the standard which such

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as preach the gospel should lift up. To which I answer; the same, for substance, which Moses and all the prophets lifted up, under the Old Testament; which was Christ, in type or figure, and which the apostles and evangelists lifted up, under the New, which was Christ without a veil: Christ, as he is God's salvation, or the truth, as it is in Jesus, is the standard we should be lifting up. This, like the canopy of heaven, is of a vast extent, and would employ the mind of a Solomon, to the years of a Methusalem, in the study thereof; as it hath done, for a longer space of time, the minds of angels; and yet we are told, for their comfort and encouragement, who are babes in Christ, that whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of Godⁿ. Now where this new birth is, there will be a following on to know the Lord; to which end such a book as the bible is put into every believer's hand, and the Spirit promised, to teach us the right use thereof. Now in lifting up this standard, against the impenitent and unbelieving world, we should preach, as the apostle Paul did, repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ^o; "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith

ⁿ 1 John v. 1.^o Acts xx. 21.

toward the Lord Jesus Christ." It is not sufficient for us, who preach the gospel, to teach the duty of repentance, unless we tell our hearers where, and from whom the grace of repentance is to be had, that Christ is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins ^p.

In lifting up this standard against the Arians and Socinians, we should enlarge on the true and proper divinity of Christ; and let our hearers know, that there is not that name in scripture, by which the living and true God is known and distinguished from dumb idols, but is given to the Lord Jesus Christ; neither is there that divine perfection mentioned in scripture, by which the living and true God is distinguished from lifeless idols, but is ascribed to the Lord Jesus Christ. Neither is there any act of divine worship mentioned or commanded, in scripture, to be paid to the living and true God, and forbid to be given to idols, but is commanded to be given to the Lord Jesus Christ. Neither are there any works, either of nature or of grace, be it creation work, or that of preservation, or the disposals of providence, or redemption work, be it the renovation of the soul, or the

resurrection of the body, or the judging of the world, or the making of all things new ; but they are ascribed, in scripture, to the Lord Jesus Christ ; which is full and abundant proof, that, according to his divine nature, he is one in essence with the Father ; not a mere creature, though the first of all creatures, but the most high God, manifested in the flesh. To say, that in the Bible such things as these are ascribed unto a mere creature, would be to place that book of God below the Alcoran.

We should also, in lifting up this glorious standard against the Pelagians and Arminians, enlarge on the love and grace, on the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ ; and let our hearers know, how able he is to save, to the utmost of God's mercy, and of the sinner's misery, all that come to God by him ; in making elect sinners first a wise, and a willing, and so a pardoned, justified, reconciled, adopted, sanctified, and, at last, a glorified people.

We should also, in lifting up this standard, enlarge on the incarnation of Christ, and on those royalties which belong to him, as he is God's essential Word made flesh ; of which royalties you have a short, but a most incomparable account given by Paul to the Colossians^a, that Christ

^a Col. i. 15, &c.

is there spoke of, as incarnate, is evident, because, thus considered, he hath blood ; of which you read ^r, “ In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.” Then follows, “ Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature ; for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they are thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers ; all things were created by him, and for him ; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” As more of God is to be seen in one man, especially in the first Adam, than in all the beasts of the field, or birds of the air ; so more of the glory of God is to be seen in the face or person of Jesus Christ, than in the whole world of angels, as well as of men ; or in never so many worlds of mere creatures, never so varied or diversified. Mathematicians can easily tell how many ways the letters of the alphabet may be disposed, or how many millions of words may be made out of four and twenty letters ; but who can say how many worlds may, by the power of God, be form'd out of so much matter as this earth, and the visible heavens contain ? But let their possible numbers be what they will, it may be said,

^r Col. i. 14.

for the glory of our Emmanuel, that his face would out-shine them all ; for God manifested in the flesh, must be, and is, the top manifestation God ever did, or will make of himself, either to men or to angels. Accordingly we are told †, that “ out of Zion the perfection of beauty God hath shined ;” so shined, as to out-shine all other discoveries ; just as the natural sun out-shines the moon and all the stars ; and in the gift of Christ to be Head of the church, and Saviour of the body, he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence † ; “ Wherein he hath abounded towards us, in all wisdom and prudence ;” a like place with this †, “ In whom, or wherein, are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” There seems to me to be a like difference between God manifested in the flesh, and all other manifestations, which there is between the print of a man’s foot, and his personal presence. How little of the man is to be known by the print of his foot, if compared with what may be known by personal converse ? One in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, must vastly out-shine all the inhabitants of heaven, how glorious soever they may be. Thus is our Emmanuel the brightness of the Father’s glory,

† Psal. i. 3.

† Eph. i. 3.

† Col. ii. 3.

and the exprefs image of his Perfon, as he is God-man Mediator ; for thus confider'd the apoftle fpeaks of him ^w. For the purging of our fins there mentioned, was made by the fhedding of his blood, who, as incarnate, had blood to fhed ; blood, fo his own as no other blood was or could be. By his Word to be made flefh, God made the worlds ; by him, as incarnate, he upholds and governs them : thus confider'd he is an Head of confirmation to elect angels, and an Head of redemption to the elect among the children of men. The royalties belonging to Chrift, as he is the Word made flefh, fhould no more be paffed over in filence by us, in lifting up this ftandard, than the temple at Jerufalem fhould be left out in the hiftory or map of that city. We may fafely fay it, that had not our Emmanuel, thus confider'd, been laid in the purpofes of God, as the foundation of the whole creation, this world would have been like an houfe built upon the fand ; in which fenfe he may well be called, and is the firft-born of every creature.

V. I fhall now give you fome account of the design of this Lecture ; which is truly great, and fuch as becomes us Pro-

^w Heb. i. 3, &c.

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testant Dissenters to engage in ; for it is no other than in Christ's name, and under the influences of his Spirit, to lift up a standard against error.

There are great evils, which not barely threaten, but are actually coming in like a flood upon us.

1. There is the horrible evil of Atheism introduced by a number of Free-thinkers, whom the Word of God calls fools^x ; who out-sin the devil, in going about to persuade themselves, and others, that there is no God. Of these I am credibly inform'd there are several clubs in this great city; and yet it is no less certain, that there must be an eternal, unoriginated Being, than it is that there is any Being at all ; for as certainly as something now is, something hath always been ; which eternal unoriginated Being is God. It is also as certain, that the several species, or kinds of beasts, of birds, of fishes, and of insects, as well as the children of men, could not at first come into this world, as they now do ; the first man, for instance, could have no father, but must, by some superior power, be immediately form'd, and brought forth, not in a state of helpless infancy, but able to help himself. Thus the first of beasts must not need the dug ; nor the first of

^x Psal. xiv. 3.

birds be from an egg, or need the nest, or the wing : as lumps of paint never so well mix'd, though they may be said virtually to contain all the pictures which the ablest hand can draw with them, yet without a skilful hand can express nothing ; so dull unactive matter cannot form it self into the meanest plant, nor infect without a superior power ; which superior Being, who form'd all things, is God.

2. Another desolating evil, like to the former, is that of Deism, introduced by a set of men, who, taking no notice of the damage done by sin, assert the sufficiency of natural religion, to make men happy in both worlds, and so pour the utmost contempt on all divine and supernatural revelation, how well soever it is attested, tho' by a cloud of witnesses, many of whom seal'd their testimony with their blood, by a great number of miracles wrought in the presence of inquisitive, as well as of implacable enemies ; and by a set of most remarkable prophecies, which have all along had their accomplishment, and are still accomplishing. The light of nature, when at best is but like the shine of the moon, if compared with the sun-shine of the gospel, and, since the fall, is like the moon in an eclipse : now if the moon, at full, be not able, much less is it, when in an eclipse, able either

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to make or to rule the day. Deism, about an hundred years ago, was, in a manner, confined to France and Italy; but of late it hath passed the Alps, and crossed the seas, and spreads like a mighty contagion far and near here in England.

3. Another desolating evil, which not only threatens, but is come in like a flood upon us, is that of error in the things of God; particularly in the doctrines of the gospel, from that of the Arian, to that of the Galatian error; or from those who deny the true and proper divinity of Christ, to such as say he is not the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believes; which is no new nor unforetold enemy; for the apostle, so many years ago, hath told us, that there must be heresies, that they who are approved may be made manifest. But, blessed be God, tho' the foundations may be attacked and undermined, they cannot be removed; for if they could, what should the righteous do?

4. Another desolating evil, which threatens to carry all before it, is that of profaneness. This is supported by such as regard not the sabbath; but cry down all publick worship; make a jest of closet and of family prayer; banter and burlesque scripture, and pour the utmost contempt on a standing ministry; though it has been hitherto,

hitherto, and will to the end of time, be supported by Christ, who said, "Lo, I am with you alway, unto the end of the world."

5. Another desolating evil, is that of immorality. This is nearly allied to, but not the same with the former, and is propagated and spread, not barely by private conversation, but in print, by such as deny that there is any real intrinsic difference between moral good, and moral evil; who say, to tell a lye, is, in the nature of the thing, as commendable as to speak the truth; and to be a thief, as to be an honest man. But they may as soon perswade us, that there is no real difference between light and darkness, pain and pleasure, life and death: the mind in man is under a like necessity to own, that a dutiful son, or subject, excels one that hath murder'd his father, or shot his prince, as the palate is to give the preference to wholesome pleasant food, before stinking carrion; or, as the eye is, to prefer a pleasant agreeable prospect, before a dark cave, or a dreadful precipice. It is not more evident to the mathematician, that the three angles of every triangle are equal to two right, than it is to all mankind, that justice and mercy excel tyranny and oppression.

6. Another desolating evil, which threatens to overflow like a flood, is that of li-

bertinism, or turning the grace of God into wantonness. It is not unlikely but Cain might presume, upon the grace of the first promise, in his murder of Abel ; to be sure those libertines did on that of the gospel, of whom Jude speaks ^y ; and thus do multitudes in our dark day ; for though a work of grace cannot be abused, all the doctrines of grace may. The outward court is full of libertines, who are not under the law to Christ ; of whom the apostle speaks ^z, “ For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.”

These are the evils of our times ; some of which we, who preach this Lecture, shall, in Christ's name, and under the influences of his Spirit, lift up the standard of the Word against, even the truth, as it is in Jesus ; who, as God manifested in the flesh, was a full, unanswerable, visible, and most satisfying proof of the Being of a God ; of the truth of the Old Testament, and consequently a matchless recommendation of the Christian religion, as it is contained in the New. Nothing could be expected from the Word made flesh ; and

^y Jude, ver. 4.

^z Phil. iii. 18, 19.

in that flesh sustaining the character of a Redeemer, that was not to be met with in the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ: his divinity, sonship, and mediation, were wrote in characters full of greatness and glory upon all these; so wrote, as to put angels to school again: those vast proficients in the book of nature, are represented as learning of the church, the manifold wisdom of God, as it shines forth in the face of our Emmanuel, the Lord Jesus Christ^a.

The design of this Lecture therefore is not to oppose any other orthodox Lecture, nor to put a slight upon any of our brethren in the ministry; but to bear an extraordinary united testimony against growing infidelity, and spreading errors.

Now we your Lecturers, though we neither expect nor desire the encouragement of the purse, want your prayers; that in a spirit of meekness, and not of wrath and bitterness, we may instruct those who shall oppose themselves, and defend, with a right gospel Spirit, the great truths thereof; for between true Christian zeal and rage, there is a like difference, which there is between the warm beams of the sun, and the desolating flames of Ætna.

^a Eph. iii. 10.

36 *The Spirit's Standard lifted up, &c.*

Brethren, pray for us, that we may neither study, nor preach, nor pray in our own spirits, but do all in Christ's Spirit; the promise of whom, as he is Christ's glorifier, is, in a way of eminency, the promise of the Father under the New Testament; as the promise of the Messiah was his promise under the Old.

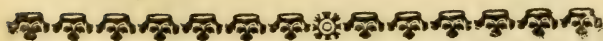
For your encouragement who shall attend, as well as for ours who are to preach, take the following scripture, and with it I will conclude ^b; "The floods have lifted up, O Lord; the floods have lifted up their voice, the floods lift up their waves:" Understand it of ungodly men, in all ages and places; especially of such as persecute the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus, though, for want of power, it be only with the lip and pen; "The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters; yea, than the mighty waves of the sea."

^b Psal. xciii. 3, 4.



T W O
SERMONS
ON THE
INSUFFICIENCY
OF
NATURAL RELIGION.

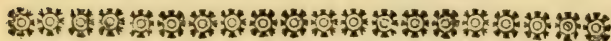
By ABRAHAM TAYLOR,
Minister of the Gospel.







SERMON I.



I COR. XI. 14.

The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

GOD created man upright, but he soon fell, and stripp'd himself of the robes of innocence and integrity, with which he was clad, as he came pure out of his Maker's hands.

It lay entirely in the disposing will of God, whether he would save man at all after

his revolt ; and seeing he thought fit to rescue part of Adam's posterity from the ruin which the fall brought upon them, he certainly had a right to pitch upon what method he thought fittest, to bring about their recovery. Whether God could have accomplish'd the salvation of men as well any other way, as in the method he has took of choosing them in Christ, entering into a covenant with him, as the Surety, and with all the elect in him as his seed ; and, in the fulness of time, sending him in the flesh, that he might suffer death, to purchase the redemption of such as he had given him, is a question too high for us to determine, and therefore is vain and unprofitable. It is insolently intruding into things not seen, for us to take upon us to determine absolutely what a God of infinite wisdom and power may do, or might have done. However, this we must tenaciously adhere to, that it is inconsistent with the nature of God, for him to injure any of his perfections, to save such as deserve not his favour ; we are not to doubt but that God will glorify one attribute as well as another, in rescuing ruin'd criminals : so that, though we suppose him ever so unlimited in his sovereignty, or ever so rich in his mercy, we must still aver, that he never would, in order to shew his sovereignty, or make known his mercy, suffer

his justice to remain unsatisfied, and consequently not glorified, or his holiness and truth to be tarnish'd ; but he is as much concerned to glorify his justice, and to shew forth his holiness and truth, as he can be to manifest his sovereignty, or to magnify his mercy. God therefore shew'd the greatness of his wisdom in contriving the method of man's salvation, that it might be by Christ's satisfying for sin : in this way all his perfections are set in the most amiable light, justice is glorified to the utmost, and has vindicated its rights, in that a satisfaction of infinite value has been yielded by an almighty Redeemer ; holiness sparkles with the brightest lustre, seeing he, who is purity itself, has shew'd his hatred of sin to be so great, that he spared not his own Son, when he only knew sin by imputation ; the truth of him, who is invariable in faithfulness, is fully established, in that he has exacted the punishment threaten'd ; goodness appears in its full beauty, as a Redeemer is provided for such as have destroy'd themselves, and the greatest blessings are bestow'd freely upon the unworthy ; mercy is display'd to the utmost, because provision is made for bringing sinners to partake of the happiness they had forfeited ; wisdom and power are greatly magnified, since a way is laid out and finish'd, in
which

which justice and holiness might not be injured, and yet grace and mercy might be eminently exalted.

This is the method of man's salvation, which the scriptures teach; and as it is the only way of thinking which men can fall into, in order to glorify all God's perfections, it must be concluded to be the most rational scheme in the world. The design of God was to glorify his own perfections, to exalt Christ, to stain the pride of man's glory, and to shew the necessity of holiness; therefore, as the holy scripture declares and reveals this wonderful plan, it is no marvel that it should be ridiculed, as a huddle of foolish opinions, by the vain and proud pretenders to reason, who make what surpasses their shallow capacities the subject of their scorn, and treat with contempt all that is above their condensed apprehensions. As the design of revelation is to thwart the pride of fallen man, it is no wonder that insolent creatures, who would be independent on God, and who imagine that they are wise enough to find out their duty, and able enough to pursue their own happiness, should rise up with rancour and malice, against what crosses their corrupt reason, and has a tendency to throw down the lofty bulwarks of their vain imaginations. The contempt which is cast on revelation is not new;
for

for the great apostle Paul, after he had told us that he spoke or declared the things that are freely given us of God, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, has presently subjoined these words; "The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." By the ^a natural man, is not to be understood one wallowing in lust, and sunk in the mire of sensuality, but the man of bare reason; he who will use no other helps, than what he can procure by mere rational attainments, such a man, though possess'd of a good share of natural light, yet if he is without a spiritual discerning, or without wisdom afforded him from above, brands the doctrines and mysteries of pure revelation with folly, because he cannot fully comprehend them; not considering that the

^a The word, in the original, is ψυχικὸς ὁ ἀνθρώπος, homo animatus; the word ψυχικὸς is derived from ψυχή, not in the sense wherein it is taken for the soul in general, but for the soul with its attainments: Thus Dionysius of Halicarnassus, spoke of the ψυχή of Lyfias the orator, meaning what we should call in English the genius of Lyfias.

Ἐπειτα μὲν αἱ χείρες αἱ τ' ἡλέως ἐπικροτῶν δοκῶσι μοι τ' γεφὴν τ' Λυσίᾳ ψυχῆς αὐτὴν τίθεμαι, καὶ ἔδ' ἐν ἔτι προσηγὼν ταύτης σκυπῶν ἀξιώ. Jud. de Lyfia, cap. xi. Vol. II. p. 135. Ed. Ox. p. 85. Ed. Franc.

mysteries

mysteries of reason, such as the being and perfections of God, can no more be fully comprehended by him, than those of revelation. If we consider man as renew'd, and as such having his mind enlighten'd, it must be own'd, that the mysteries of reason and pure revelation have such great depths in them, that they are not to be plumb'd by the line, even of a sanctified understanding: nay, it may be justly said, that the perfections of God are not to be fully grasp'd by any created mind. It is no wonder then, that such as are left to bare reason in a corrupt state, should, as brute beasts, condemn the sacred verities, which are not suited to their depraved gust.

The scriptures have never been treated with more irreverence than they have been of late; but yet the enemies of revelation choose rather to attack them by sap and stratagem, than in an open and honourable way. Our modern Deists are shy of saying, in their publick writings, that the Christian religion is forgery, and the founder of it an impostor; but they choose to magnify the perfection of reason, and to set up what they call natural religion, as a complete body of doctrine; they can talk, with a grave sneer, of the holy scriptures, of the religion of our Saviour, and will pretend they esteem it; but, at the
same

same time, they plead, that natural religion is perfect, and needs no addition to be made to it, only they allow it may be explain'd : hence they draw this consequence, that the gospel is as old as the law of nature, and neither can nor ought to be any other than a republication of it. Their sly drift herein is to bring people to conclude, that since natural religion is perfect, if revelation contains any thing more than reason could of it self have found out, it must be discarded as imposture : now every one must grant, that the scriptures of the Old and New Testament really contain a great number of facts and doctrines, which bare reason could never have found out ; if then reason is a perfect rule, revelation, which contains more than this could find out, must be given up as fraud and forgery ; for nothing can be added to what is perfect. This is the substance of all the solemn banter and grave grimace, with which the world has of late been entertain'd ; so that it cannot be amiss to enquire, whether reason in men is really so perfect, as the pretended masters of it give out ; and whether natural religion is so complete, as is affirmed.

It must be own'd, that the labour of the Deists in assaulting the Christian scheme, has been made very easy, and their work has been, in a great measure, done for them,

them, by many treacherous professors of the religion of Jesus. Many betrayers of the cause of revelation, have forged weapons for the enemies of it, in preventing them the pains of attacking particular doctrines. Men who would lose all patience, if we question'd their owning the sufficiency of scripture, and who have very much in their mouths a noisy out-cry, that the bible, the bible, is the religion of Protestants, have brought the charge of nonsense and contradiction against the great Protestant doctrines of the ever-blessed Trinity in Unity, absolute election, original sin, the necessity of an infinite satisfaction, the fulness and particularity of redemption, justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, the inability of man to convert himself, the efficacy of divine grace, the perseverance of the saints, the resurrection of the same numerical body, and the eternity of hell torments: all these doctrines have been misrepresented, exploded, derided, and burlesqued by such as profess themselves Christians, nay, by such as would appear zealous to promote practical religion: so that the Deists have had little to do, but to stand still and smile; whilst others were doing their work for them, perhaps without knowing it; tho' it is to be fear'd, that some of these would not keep out of their tents, if they could retain

retain their preferments, salaries, or subscriptions. It would be well, if all who have gone into this way, who are alarm'd at the growth of Deism, would consider what they have been doing. Many have been immoderately pleased with being applauded, by the adversaries of revelation, for being rational divines, and men of free thought; but though the enemies of Christianity compliment them, to induce them to go on to do their work for them, yet it is known to many that they secretly condemn them. The more thinking Deists know, that the doctrines which these disputers arraign, as unscriptural and irrational, are the things which are really contain'd in scripture, which, for that reason, they chiefly neglect; and they look upon these removers of the ancient land-marks, however they may flatter them, either to be fools or cheats. The opposers of the ancient faith are very forward to ascribe the growth of infidelity to mens being led to pay a regard to what they call irrational doctrines; but the case really is, a denial of revelation has always follow'd upon attempts made to subvert the old Protestant doctrines, and as these have succeeded with giddy unsettled persons, in proportion have the ravages of Deism been extended.

Of the Insufficiency of

Another thing which has greatly contributed to weaken the cause of Christianity, has been the zeal of some to recommend systems of morality, under the whimsical title of natural religion. There is no question to be made, but that some persons, who engaged this way, had no design to weaken the regard men should have to reveal'd religion, but by these means the peculiar doctrines of Christianity have been jumbled out. It has been said, that during the times of our civil commotions, there was little preach'd up but faith in Christ, and that the duties of morality were little insisted on: it is certain, that some ignorant enthusiastick preachers insisted then much on eternal union with Christ, and that sin could do a believer no harm, but all wise and thoughtful men abhor'd such immoral conceits; however, the charge was laid against all who maintain'd the doctrine of grace; and accordingly when a state alteration ensued, as it is natural for men who take a partial view of things, when they endeavour to avoid one extreme, to run into the other, neglecting the middle way, all strove to shew themselves as opposite to those who went before, as might be. Therefore the Christian doctrines, if not oppos'd, were wholly neglected, and little was insisted upon but moral duties, under the odd title of
natural

natural religion: then books could be wrote on the Christian plan, call'd the whole duty of man, without stating the doctrine of faith in Christ, the prime duty of a Christian. It must be observed, that at the same time that natural religion was talk'd of, to the neglect of the doctrines of revelation, a deluge of Atheism, irreligion and immorality flow'd in upon those of the national establishment; and whether since we of the separation have heard so much noise about it, there has not been a declension as to justice and common honesty, a contempt of the sabbath, and a neglect of public worship, is what every one is able to judge of, who has look'd a little into the world.

I. I shall enquire what we ought to understand by natural religion, or in what sense the light of nature is to be taken.

Since so many fine things have been said of natural religion, it may be well worth while to consider what the thing is, which is dress'd up in such fair colours, and which yet every one is so much at a loss to find out. In one sense it may be taken for the light with which Adam and Eve, our first parents, were bless'd, whilst they were clad with innocence. If it is taken in this sense, it must be granted, that reason was much more perfect than now it is.

Our great progenitor, and our general mother, as long as they ranged the fragrant bowers of paradise, and stray'd about the pleasant mazes of that wilderness of sweets, in which the kind hand of their Creator had placed them, were very happy creatures: Their understandings were clear and strong, their judgment was unbiass'd, and no disorderly passions raged in their unruffled breasts; they were created in the image of God, and the likeness of their mighty Maker shone forth in wisdom, truth, and severe and pure sanctity; their obedience to the law of their God was not forced, neither was it from fear; but they fulfill'd the command of him who placed them in happiness with delight and alacrity: they knew all that was necessary for them to be acquainted with, and they yielded universal obedience to the various commands of the heavenly Potentate, who created them out of the dust.

Though it is to be allowed that reason was much more complete and perfect, in our first parents, before the fall, than it is in us their miserable posterity, since we have been plunged into ruin and misery by their apostacy; yet it is not to be granted that the light of nature was every way a complete and perfect rule, even in the state of innocence and integrity. Though man was
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free from sinful imperfections, yet he was not an absolutely perfect being, for no creature is such; and as he was not absolutely perfect, so his natural light was not an absolutely complete rule to go by. If it had been so, he would not have needed any directions, as to what he was to do, but would, without any supernatural assistance, have known his duty in every part and circumstance of it: But this was far from being the case; he needed to be ^b instructed by God, as to his circumstances of life, and as to some parts of his duty. It was by supernatural light, or by revelation from God, that he came to know that he had dominion over all the creatures in the lower world, it was by divine direction that he was to take fruits and herbs for his food, it was by a command from above that he was to refrain from eating the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death, and it was by instruction from his Creator that he perform'd instituted worship, or kept the seventh day as a day of sacred rest. These revelations would never have been made to our first father, whilst he continued peacefully to enjoy the spicy groves of paradise, if natural light had been to him a perfect rule. If he had not needed supernatural light,

^b Gen. i. 29. ii. 16, 17.

God would not have afforded it, for the all-wise Creator does nothing in vain, whatever foolish men may think; therefore as he had light by revelation, it is plain he needed it; and if so, reason was not every way a perfect rule. If any urge, in answer to this, that the account Moses gives of the primitive state of man, is an allegory, they are to be pitied for their profaneness and pride; and they are not to be envied for not having reverence for scripture, and humility sufficient to make them submit their wisdom to revelation, and to induce them, when they are gravel'd with an unfurmoutable difficulty, frankly to own it.

However, if we were to suppose reason in man, in a state of innocence, to be a perfect rule, of what avail is all this to us? who may find, by sad experience, that it is not with us as it was with man when he repos'd himself in the peaceful shades of Eden, and roved about the verdurous walks of paradise. Our understandings are now darken'd, so that we are often at a loss about the nature of our duty; and when we cannot say we are entirely ignorant of our duty, and are, in judgment, convinced that we ought to comply with it, how are our understandings blinded, and our judgments corrupted by our unruly passions, and our irregular appetites? If reason was
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our only rule, we should bribe it to silence, by the pleasure of following our own inclinations, and then we should be sway'd by unruly lusts, without the least opportunity of knowing that the things in which we delight, if pursued throughout, would entail endless disquietments upon us.

The common notion persons now seem to have of natural religion, is, that it is a body of principles and duties, which men gather from reason and scripture, receiving into their systems whatsoever they like in revelation, and leaving out all such doctrines as they do not approve of. That there is one God, and that he is invested with infinite perfections, is the voice of reason and revelation, this therefore must needs be put down as the prime doctrine of natural religion; that this one God rules and guides the universe, by his wise providence, is what reason and observation may assure us of; this therefore is not left out of the systems of the religion of nature; that the soul is immortal, and that there is a final state of happiness and misery, is what few are hardy enough to deny; that men, as creatures, are obliged to worship and serve the God to whom they owe their being; and that, as creatures fitted for society, they are obliged to consult the good and happiness of others, is what all have not the front to call in question.

These principles, which have met with the general assent of mankind, are the great principles of reason and scripture: Any one who will not omit any of these, if he will take the pains to see what dress could be made up for them, out of the writings of mere Pagans, will soon be convinced, that they must wear no other than a mean and contemptible garb, such as would not set them off, or recommend them to the high esteem of men: they might be compared to a picture not coloured, where the lines may be drawn with art and regularity, but have not a striking force upon the eye: but if these principles of reason are set off with the strong, lively, and glowing colours, in which they are painted in the scriptures, they command admiration. What account can be gather'd from the writings of Pagans, of the being and perfections of God? Though they own'd one Supreme, yet they introduced a rabble of inferior gods, and so worshipp'd creatures besides the Creator, how low and lame were their notions of the spiritual nature, and the immortality of the soul? And what mean figments did they take up with about a future state? How uncertain were they about God's governing the world? And though they had among them some who were great proficient in several social duties, what can

we gather from them of love to God, resignation to his wise disposal, as to the concerns of life, self-denial, and universal charity and benevolence? These are duties which are agreeable to right reason; but let any one say where they are well stated, by such as were entire strangers to revelation. Therefore, in our day, natural religion is deck'd in plumes borrowed from scripture, and then is set up in opposition to it, as a perfect rule, and as such not needing the assistance of a revelation. This is scandalously base and unfair. For instance: no one mere rational writer ever gave a tolerable account of a future state; and none of the delineators of the religion of nature, since the promulgation of Christianity, ever did it, without leaving the plainest traces of his having aid from scripture; and yet these sketches, which are drawn by the help of scripture, must be palm'd upon the world, as the doctrines of mere reason unassisted by the light of revelation. Thus scripture is pillaged, in order to its being represented as a needless useless thing; for if a man can be so silly, as to be brought to think, that those points which artful men pick out from scripture, which has nothing inconsistent with reason, though it contains much above mere human reason, are things to be known without the help of it, they will easily give

it up as unnecessary ; and the more, because it reveals matters too high for their low understanding, and so thwarts their pride. It is not fair then to call that natural religion, the defects of which are supplied by truths taken from the oracles of God ; neither is it just to recommend it as a perfect scheme, when it cannot be put in any tolerable dress, without the necessary help of that very thing ; to make which seem unnecessary, so much pains are taken to deck it. All this must be understood of natural religion, when it is set off in the best manner ; but it must be own'd, that some of its recommenders are so infatuated, as not to borrow that help they might, in order to make it agreeable, and are so ignorant, as to shew its great imperfection, by making it resemble Atheism. We are told, that the distinction of right and wrong, virtue and vice, is entirely independent on the will of God, and that it arises from the nature of things, by which senseless jargon may be meant fate, chance, the animating soul of the world, or any other unmeaning thing, or hard word, without an idea annex'd to it. It is pretended, that men are not made by God for himself, and that he has no motive, on his own account, to give them laws, or to punish the breach of them, and that consequently they are not accountable to him ; but that such fully
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answer the end of their creation, as contribute all they can to their own and others happiness. This is to suppose, that God has power to create rational creatures, and it is a favour that this is allow'd, but that he has no authority to prescribe them laws, seeing the rules of justice rise from the nature of things, and he is confined to act by them, as much as those he has created; that he has no justice to glorify when he is provoked, but is obliged to be kind to all his creatures, whether they obey him, or rebel against him; in short, that he is an indolent being, such as was the god of the Epicureans; that man is independent on him who created him, and preserves him, and that he is to be his own judge, whether he answers the end of his creation, by promoting his own happiness, and that of others. Thus the irrational stuff, which was hiss'd off the stage, with just contempt, when it was introduced by Epicurus, is afresh brought on, to shew the sufficiency of human reason, in our enlighten'd age of search and enquiry. It would be doing too much honour to such monstrous absurdity, to go about gravely to confute them; and it would be labour and time as ill spent, as it would be to argue with a man that stiffly denies that two and three make five, or to wrangle with one who will have it, that it is as light at midnight as at noon.

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The assurance with which such irrational fancies are vented, does not prove that their asserters have more brains, or brighter parts than others, but only that they have harder foreheads and thicker skulls than the generality of men. These bold champions of infidelity deny that man's reason is impair'd by the fall, but they give the fullest demonstration that it is greatly sunk, even almost to a degree of brutality, in themselves, and by this afford us, tho' stupidly, and against their wills, a sensible proof of the fall of man, which they banter and insipidly ridicule. Were not the rational faculties greatly decay'd, no persons could ever dream of a God of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, having no motive, on his own account, to give his creatures laws, or to punish the breach of them, and that men are not accountable to him that made them. It is not worth while to talk with creatures who have so much laid aside the use of reason, it is throwing pearls to swine: we can only refer the decision to the hour, which a few years will introduce, and then these rebels against heaven will find whether they are accountable to their Maker or not.

All that has been said of late, by way of panegyric upon reason, and the light of nature, is founded on a mere fallacy. The adversaries of revelation do not speak
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of reason, as it is in this or the other man, as it may be less clear in one than another, but they speak of reason in the abstract, and in that sense it may be allowed to be of a very large extent. No one will be so silly as to say, that reason, in the abstract idea of it, is insufficient and imperfect, for nothing is to be regarded which is contrary to reason. The question is not then, whether reason abstractedly consider'd is imperfect, for that would be questioning whether truth is truth, or whether right reason is right reason; which would be only trifling, and spending words to no purpose. True reason is right, and what is right, cannot, as such, be said to be imperfect: however, this poor and mean quibble is all that the pleaders for the sufficiency of reason have to talk upon. It would be ridiculous for any one to say, that the light of the sun is not sufficient to enable a man to keep his path, but it signifies very little, when a man is involved in the shade of the evening, to tell him he must not question that the sun's light is sufficient for him to see by. The question really is, whether reason, as it is now in men, whether the light of nature, as it is in men in their present state, which none can venture to say, in fact, is not a state of degeneracy, is a sufficient rule to inform men what they ought to believe and receive, to shew them how they

they may find out what is true and right, and to direct them in the more private walks of life, as well as when they appear on the public stage of the world, where they may have the advantage of seeing the examples of others; it is, whether natural religion, of it self, discovers all that a man is to believe concerning God, all the methods necessary for him to take, in order to be reconciled to him, and regain his favour, and all that is required of man in his private, relative, and social character.

When we enquire whether reason is now a sufficient rule, the only sense in which we can take the light of nature, or natural religion, is, for the remains of natural light in men of superior reason, who have been left entirely without the help of revelation of any kind; and if it is tried carefully, or view'd in this light, it will appear to be very imperfect and deficient. It is easy to tell us, that reason is reason, truth is truth, and virtue is virtue; but what are we the wiser by being told such fine things, if we find our selves and others deficient in reason, puzzled about truth, and apt to take vice for virtue? No one will say cruelty is good, but how many think that persecution, an enormous vice, is lawful, because it is design'd for good ends, to set men right, and to keep them from leading others wrong? It is easy for men

to pick things out of scripture, and to prove them agreeable to reason, since there is nothing in the oracles of God, but what is consonant to the highest reason; by this means a very beautiful system of morality may be put together; but can this be a delineation of the religion of nature. The only way to judge of the sufficiency, on the one hand, and of the defects on the other, of the light of nature, is to examine whether it brightly shined, or was greatly shaded, in such as had nothing else to illuminate them, and who yet had as clear intellectuals, as great knowledge of the world, as any now, and who, in learning and politeness, exceeded many of our new luminaries, or rather comets, who, instead of increasing our light, hurry the world, and spread error and irreligion. If it is thus tried, the light of nature will not be found to resemble the sun, when, crown'd with surpassing glory, it illuminates the earth, but rather to be like it, when, in dim eclipse, it sheds gloom and twilight over some parts of the world, and so puzzles and perplexes such as are not acquainted with the natural causes of its being darken'd, and throws them into a state of doubt and uncertainty.

II. I shall shew that reason is not a perfect rule in matters of religion, and shall answer
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some pleas that are offer'd in behalf of the monstrous and extravagant supposition, that it is a sufficient guide in sacred matters.

I would not be thought to have respect only or principally to profess'd Deists, but chiefly to regard those treacherous advocates for Christianity, who, under pretence of writing in its vindication, basely and vilely betray the noblest of causes to avowed Infidels. It is only to have the good word of the enemies of revelation, who happen, through the degeneracy of our unhappy times, to gain a great vogue, that these base, ignoble, and ungenerous souls prove false to the interest of him whom they call their master, and traiterously give it up to his open enemies. That they give up the cause of Christianity to the adversaries of revelation, is most certain; for if reason is of it self a sufficient rule, any addition to what is of it self sufficient, is impertinent and needless; this is evident to the dullest capacity; and all that can be said in favour of revelation, by such as make this concession, is only shewing, that they can contradict themselves; for if reason is of it self sufficient, in matters of religion, what need can there be of the Christian revelation? Was there any necessity to make known any thing new, and to require it to be believed, when what was
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known before was sufficient without it? This is granting to the Deists, that though there may be some good things in Christianity, yet there was no absolute necessity for it, which is what they desire to have yielded to them, and then it is easy for them to shew the absurdity of adding any thing to what was good enough of it self, without any such addition. It is very well known, that the Deists are not wanting to make use of this extravagant concession; and any one, who consults their writings, may easily see that they, in reality, say very little, but what is put into their mouths, by such as would appear to stand up in the defence of revelation against them, but either through ignorance, or treachery, betray the cause to them: whether it is through folly or knavery that this is done, it is certain, they who are guilty of doing it, have much to answer for, seeing they have done a great deal more hurt to the interest of Christ, than all the avowed enemies of it, of themselves, ever did or could do.

It is a very poor way of arguing, for any ^c to tell us, “ That the true preference
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^c See the Plea for Human Reason, p. 47, 48. This is said, how truly I know not, to be wrote by Mr. Jackson, the noted Arian, the amanuensis to Dr. Clark, in the memorable dispute with Dr. Waterland, about the supreme divinity of our blessed Lord, which is called, by the ignorant blasphemers

of Christianity is, (not that reason, in any state of men, is insufficient of it self to virtue and happiness, but) that Christianity is a clearer and more powerful guide, having improved the light of reason by the supernatural evidence and declaration of God's will, and final intention of saving sinners, by the free pardon of them for the sake and merits of the death of Christ, which mere reason was not able to discover or determine, and which plain declaration of the means of man's redemption is a more powerful motive and obligation to universal obedience, than reason could ever with certainty propose." This is a mere heap of confusion and inconsistency. It is very likely there is a juggle, in using that odd expression, "Reason in any state of men;" but if it means any thing, it must have respect to reason in man's present corrupt state: Now if reason, of it self, is a sufficient guide to virtue and happiness, can man need any thing more sufficient than a sufficient guide, can he need to be guided to any thing better than to virtue

blasphemer who wrote this Plea, a wretched Anti-christian Hypothesis. If Mr. Jackson is the author of the Plea, we may judge what was the design of Dr. Clarke and him, in advancing Arianism, viz. to open the way for Deism. Several things have been wrote on both sides, on the question I am upon, since these Sermons were preach'd, which was in November, 1730. but I have chose to let them appear as they were first composed.

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and happiness ; certainly no. If so, then there is no necessity for a clearer and more powerful guide, or for its being improved by the supernatural declaration of God's will, relating to things which it could not discover, or for more powerful motives to obedience, than it could ever with certainty propose. On the other hand, if there was need of the Christian revelation to be a more sure light, and a more powerful guide than reason ; if there was room for the defects of the light of nature to be supplied, by the declaring the wonderful plan of the salvation of sinners, on the account of the merits of the death of Christ, which was a mystery that was out of the ken of bare reason ; and if there was cause to make use of a more powerful motive to universal obedience to the will of their great Creator, than natural religion could ever with certainty propose ; if these things are true, as they certainly are, and are allowed to be by the advocates for reason, it will inevitably and invincibly follow, that reason in men, in their present state, is not a sufficient rule to guide them to virtue and happiness ; and it may justly be asserted, that the pleaders for its sufficiency are stupid enough to contradict themselves, in saying, in the same breath, that it is sufficient, and yet that there is need for its being still made more sufficient.

It is very odd, in the pleaders^d for the sufficiency of reason to say, 'that "Reason (if men would have attended to it) would always have given them sufficient hopes and security of their acceptance with God, upon their repentance, and sincere best endeavours to do what was right and good, and agreeable to reason." If by reason is meant reason in the abstract, what is said is entirely impertinent; for then by reason we must understand whatever is truth, and the whole of what is truth must be own'd to be sufficient, to instruct men, if we suppose it made known to them. If reason is taken for what share of light men, in their present state, possess, it inevitably follows, from what the advocates for its sufficiency allow, that it is really insufficient; for how can that which is in man, be his sufficient guide, if he has a propensity not to attend to it, but has such a mixture of darkness with his light, that he is at a loss what to think is best for him? Mens not attending to the dictates of right reason, but embracing things as truths, which are inconsistent with it, and contrary to it, shews that the light of nature, as it is now in them, is far from being a sufficient guide to them in matters of religion.

^d Ibid. p. 48.

It is not agreeable to truth to say, that the reason of any finite being is perfect or sufficient, in an absolute sense ; but if this could be allow'd, it does not alter the case as to us, who are the descendents of apostate Adam: our nature, as we are fallen sinful creatures, is corrupt, and consequently our reason is no sure light to guide us, because there is in our understandings much darkness, mingled with a little light. We need not desire a more plain proof of the imperfection of reason, in our corrupt state, than what we may gather from the consideration of the errors men have run into, who have set up their reason in opposition to the mysteries of nature and revelation. Many who have done this, have fully come up to what the apostle Paul said of the Gentiles^c, “ Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” When their pride has been so great, that they would not be content with owning the great mysteries of natural religion, without explaining the manner how they are, and when their insolence has rose so high, as that they have set up their reason in opposition to the mysteries of revelation, they have shew'd what short-sighted creatures they are, in vending opinions as most rational, which are entirely inconsistent

^c Rom. i. 22.

with right reason. Some have not been able to bring themselves to own, that the distinction of right and wrong is dependent on the will of God, they therefore have laid down this nonsensical paradox, that there are moral fitnesses in the reason and nature of things, which must be conceived as prior to the will of God ; and hence it is argued, that God is as much bound, by the rules of justice, as any of his creatures. That there is an essential difference between right and wrong, is most certain ; for if we conceive of God, as an infinitely good, just, and perfect being, all which is agreeable to his will, must be right, and all which is contrary to him must be wrong : but it is perfect nonsense and self-contradiction to conceive of any thing prior, in order of nature, to the first cause ; it is most shocking to imagine, that the independent being should be circumscribed by moral fitnesses ; and it is monstrous to affirm, that the sovereign Law-giver, because he can do nothing inconsistent with his own perfections, is bound by the laws he gives, as the rule of his rational creatures acting. Moral fitnesses rising from the nature of things, are only the old Pagan notion of fate revived ; and such as are fond of this unintelligible jargon, make very large advances towards the worst sort of Atheism. It is a dictate of right reason,
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which, in this case, is abundantly confirmed by revelation, that there is one only supreme, living, and true God, who is the sole Creator of all things: the scripture confirms the voice of natural light, that there is but one God, but it most clearly reveals, that, in the Unity of this Godhead, there are three divine Persons, of the same substance and perfections, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: how these can be three Persons, and yet can be one God, is a thing that is not revealed, and consequently not necessary for us to know; it is above the grasp of our narrow corrupt reason; and, in all probability, as it relates to the substance of the infinite God, it surpasses the understanding of the most perfect creatures, for that is only finite. Against this great and adorable mystery, the proud pretenders to reason rise with rage and rancour: they charge it with nonsense and contradiction; but what have these masters in buffoonery, as well as proficients in blasphemy, offer'd to us in the room of the true scripture doctrine of a Trinity in Unity? In reality, nothing which will stand the test of good sense, or is agreeable to right reason. Such as have supposed the Son and the Spirit to be different names, or to be two faculties, attributes, properties, or powers of the Father, have run into a scheme, which, if it was

true, the scriptures might be said not to be wrote with good sense; seeing it would be strange, in narrations of facts, and in the course of reasoning and debate, to speak of the Son and Spirit in the strongest language of personality that can be invented, if they were only personalized by bold metaphors, high allegories, or strong figures of speech. But the abettors of this scheme are not those whom I principally have regard to; I chiefly respect the patrons of the Arian heresy, who make the Son and the Spirit two creatures. These sons of darkness contradict, in the most daring manner, the fundamental doctrine of natural and revealed religion, that there is but one infinitely blessed God; for they suppose two creatures to be true and proper Gods, or to have all the characters of divinity, except supremacy, independence, and necessary existence, and so endeavour to graft upon Christianity the Heathenish jargon, which it was design'd to militate against, that though there is but one supreme God, there may be subordinate divinities: They most irrationally allow, that creatures may be employ'd with the supreme God, in creating the world, or in bringing all things besides themselves into being out of nothing, and so run into the greatest of absurdities, in supposing created creators: They likewise follow the Gentiles, who
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were vain in their imaginations, and whose foolish hearts were so darken'd, as to worship the creature besides the Creator, who is God blessed for ever; for though they degrade the Son and Spirit into the rank of dependent beings, yet they offer up to them subordinate worship. It is certain, from reason and scripture, that man could never create himself, but that he is the product of the supreme being, who by his providence sustains him, and by his bounty supplies his wants, and consequently that he is obliged to live to the glory of the Author of his being, and is accountable to him for the actions of his life: in this there is nothing but what is agreeable to the highest reason, yet such is the infatuation of the asserters of the sufficiency of the light of nature, that they reject this rational doctrine, and pretend, that God did not make man for himself, is not concern'd about his breaking his laws, and that he is not accountable to the most high; so that the living God must be supposed to be an indolent being, not minding what those who are the product of his hands do, in contempt of his authority.

If these things are duly consider'd, it is as insolent as it is erroneous, in the patrons of reason, to stand up for the sufficiency of it in matters of religion. However it may be in others, it is apparent, that it is greatly de-

based in these muddy creatures, who will not make use of the common helps that are thrown in their way, to guard them against the most gross absurdities. They come under the judgment which Moses, by commission from God, threaten'd should come upon Israel, in case of disobedience, when he said ^f, "The Lord shall strike thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart; and thou shalt grope at noon day, as the blind gropes in darkness, and shalt not prosper in thy ways." Tho' reason improved by revelation proclaims, that the supreme God is our Judge and Law-giver, that there is but one living God, who is our Creator, and who is to be worshipp'd by us, and that in him we live, move, and have our being, and to him must give an account of our actions; yet they shut their eyes against what light they might have, in their state of frailty and imperfection, and go about to palm upon the ignorant, such irrational stuff ^g as this, that there is a cause prior to the first cause, that the independent sovereign is himself dependent, that creatures may be subordinate deities, dependent creators,

^f Deut. xxviii. 28, 29.

^g I am not concern'd whether all these paradoxes have been started by any one advocate for the sufficiency of reason, it is enough, if each has been maintain'd by any of the antiscriptural faction, who yet call themselves Christians.

to be worshipp'd with inferior divine worship ; that he who sits at the head of the empire of providence, has brought into being rational creatures, which he made not for himself, and which are not accountable to him. Let the pleaders for the sufficiency of reason of it self, without revelation, to be a guide in religion, blush, when they shew it to be so insufficient in themselves, in bolting out such glaring absurdities ; and let them no longer assume to themselves the title of men of reason, when reason is sunk so low in them. When we think on the irrational things they amuse themselves with, we cannot but see how God is secretly pleading his own cause, even by their folly ; they receive not the truth in the love of it, and he in judgment gives them over to strong delusions, so that they are fond of the most senseless figments, which appear in the garb of novelty : When they, through pride, cry up their own reason, to the disparagement of scripture, they are left to dote upon irrational vanities, which are a disgrace to that very reason, which they labour, by undue methods, to advance to a height to which it can never justly be raised.

The treacherous betrayers of revelation, who stand up for the sufficiency of natural religion, would not appear to renounce
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the Christian doctrine, which they really give up into the hands of the Deists, its implacable enemies, and therefore they pretend to give full and direct proof of the sufficiency of human reason in matters of religion, from scripture it self. Had there been such proof, it must have been own'd to have been strange, for then scripture would have declared it self not to have been absolutely necessary for the uses of men ; but the case is far from being what these unaccurate blunderers would give out. They appear only to have cast their eyes on some passages of sacred writ, and to have laid hold of them, as in sound, seeming to countenance their cause, but not to have consider'd the texts they bring in connexion with the context. In their manner of quoting scripture, they imitate exactly the father of lies, who, when he tempted the God of truth manifested in the flesh, cited scripture only to curtail it, and to wrest it from its genuine sense. Their arguings are so mean, that a person almost needs pardon who goes about to answer them ; however, let us see what they have to say to keep their wretched cause in countenance, and to fence off conviction from themselves.

It is insolently said ⁿ, that the doctrine of the sufficiency of human reason is the

ⁿ Plea for Human Reason, p. 49, 50.

doctrine of the apostle Peter, who said thus ⁱ, with respect to Cornelius, “ Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons ; but, in every nation, he that fears him, and works righteousness, is accepted of him.” From hence this strange inference is drawn, that it appears, that, in every Heathen nation, they who follow’d the light of their natural reason and conscience, fear’d God ; whence it follows, that in the judgment of the apostle, every Heathen, by the light of natural reason, had a sufficient guide to lead him to the religious fear of God. Now nothing can be more contrary to the apostle’s sense than this : He did not speak of Heathens, who were left to the bare light of nature, being able, by the help of that, to fear God ; but he own’d his conviction, that salvation by Christ was not to be confined to the Jewish nation, but was to be made known to the Gentile world. Cornelius was one of good report among the Jews, or one who was profelyte to the Jewish religion, but was not circumcised, being one of those who were called profelytes of the gate, and so he had the scriptures of the Old Testament to instruct him, and was not left to the bare light of nature. Besides, when he, under some doubt,

ⁱ Acts x. 34, 35.

pray'd for illumination, he was directed, by an angel appearing to him to apply himself to the apostle Peter for instruction, which is a certain evidence, that his natural light was not a sufficient guide: in all probability the thing he desired to be inform'd in, was the truth of the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth; because, when Peter came to instruct him^k, he declared Christ's supreme Deity, or that he is Lord of all; he asserted the truth of his resurrection, of which he had been an eye-witness, having eat, drank, and freely conversed with his risen Master, and he shew'd him, that this Jesus who died, rose, and revived, was ordain'd to be Judge of the quick and dead. These were things which the light of nature never taught, yet they were matters in which the great apostle thought it was necessary to instruct Cornelius and his friends. A man must then have a very odd turn of head, who can bring himself to fancy, that Peter judg'd the light of nature was sufficient to guide those whom he instructed in things above it, into the religious fear of God. Had the case been so, Cornelius would not have needed to have been directed by an angel to send for Peter, in order to shew him what it was that God would have him to do.

^k Acts x. 36, 41, 42:

We are told ¹, that seeing the apostle Paul ^m has declared, that glory, honour, and peace, would be to every one that works good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile, it follows, that the law of reason, by which they were to be finally judged, was a sufficient guide in matters of religion and salvation, to those who knew not the gospel : but it is amazing, that such masters of reason could not see, that the apostle here spoke of such Jews and Gentiles as had received the Christian faith ; for he intimated as plainly as words could do it, that the persons he had mention'd, Jews as well as Gentiles, were to be judged, as to their sincerity, or the secrets of their hearts, according to the ⁿ gospel which he had preach'd. Whether it was from the stupidity of these perverse disputers, that they could not see this, or whether it was through their knavery, that they would not see it, is not easy to be determined ; they may choose which they please. The apostle had not respect to such as knew not the gospel, but to such as had received it, and made a profession of it ; and it is mere ignorance to take him as owning the light of nature to be a sufficient guide, as well as great conceit, to put off such blundering stuff for argument.

¹ Plea, &c. p. 50, 51. ^m Rom. ii. 10. ⁿ Ibid. v. 16.

It is further ° pleaded, that the same apostle ^p Paul has said, “ He that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of such as diligently seek him.” From hence a conclusion is drawn, that if reason, or the law of nature, has the sanction of rewards and punishments annex’d to it, it must follow that it is a sufficient guide in matters of religion. These deceivers, when they urged this text, took care to suppress the words immediately preceding those they have alledged, “ Without faith it is impossible to please God;” in which it is most certain, the apostle meant faith in God, as reconciled in and through Christ, and faith in Christ as a Mediator, which is a thing not known by the light of nature. Without faith in Christ, it is not possible for any to be acceptable to God; for whoever comes to him, so as to meet with a kind reception, must believe that he is a just and a holy God, and as such can only reward his fallen creatures, who diligently seek him, in and through a Mediator, on the account of his merit, and not on the account of any fancied desert in them; seeing they are so far from laying him under any obligation by what their hands can find to do, that they would not be able to answer for

° Plea, p. 51, 52.

^p Heb. xi. 6.

the fins that cleave to their best performances, if he was to deal with them as an absolute God.

To take notice but of one thing more; the sufficiency of reason to be man's guide, is ^a urged, from the wise king Solomon's ^r declaring, that God made man upright: but this truly great master of reason knew better, for he declared it to be the result of his long and diligent search after wisdom, that reason is not a sufficient guide, by reason of man's apostacy from God, by which it is corrupted: his words are; " This only have I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." The latter part of the words the antiscriptural tribe have suppress'd, as if they could not quote scripture in a way different from the author of evil. God made man upright, his understanding was without sinful defects, but in his primaeval state his reason was not a sufficient rule, for he needed instruction from God; the case of his posterity is worse, their reason is depraved and corrupted; they not only are ignorant of many things, but they are prone to follow errors, to run into dangerous mistakes, and to please themselves with many idle inventions; among which this is not the

^a Plea, &c. 53.

^r Eccles. vii. 29.

least pernicious, that sinful creatures should have the impudence to assert, that reason, or the light of nature, in their present state, is a sufficient guide to them in religious matters.

THE APPLICATION.

Seeing pride is at the bottom of all the opposition, which is made to the revelation afforded us by God, and seeing it is this makes vain and conceited men cry up reason as a perfect rule, to the disparagement of revelation, it cannot be an unseasonable admonition to professed Christians, nay, to all who pretend to be searching after truth, to be careful how they give way to a proud conceit of their own understandings. The high thoughts which creatures have entertain'd of their own intellectual abilities, have been the source and spring of all the apostacy and rebellion against the most High, which we have been acquainted with. Whatever was the particular sin, which occasion'd the thrusting of Satan, and all the legions of the heavenly hosts, which banded under his ensigns against the Highest, it is pretty certain that it took its rise from pride. This we may easily gather from a passage of the apostle Paul, wherein he prescribes it as a standing rule, that a bishop, or pastor of a gospel-church,
must

must not be a novice, which is not so much meant of one young in years, as of one who had newly taken up a profession of the Christian faith, and was but raw in the knowledge of the doctrines of revelation ; the reason ^t why a pastor ought not to be a novice is, “ Lest being lifted up, or blown up, with pride, he should fall into the condemnation of the devil.” If pride was the cause of the devil’s condemnation, it must be twisted with his first sin. It was a proud imagination, that they could make their condition better, than that in which the wisdom of a beneficent Creator had placed them, which drew a great number of the potentates of heaven to rise in rebellious arms against the God from whom they received their being ; and it was a vain desire of being higher than they were made by the sovereign Lord of nature, that engaged thousands of angels in impious league against their King, for which they were cast out of heaven, and are doom’d to spend eternal ages in woe and pain ; they are now suffer’d to range about the world, but still they are, as it were, in chains ; but, at the last and the great day, they will receive fulness of torment, and, being shut up in hell, they

^t 1 Tim. iii. 16,

will groan for ever under the weight of almighty vengeance, which will glorify it self in punishing them for their pride and rebellion. It was also pride which was the source of the woe we feel, by reason of the fall of our first parents. It does not appear, from the scripture account of the first apostacy of man, that the devil could plant any temptation on our progenitors, till he had blown them up to a proud conceit, that they could make their condition happier than it was, by transgressing the law of their Creator. When the tempter ^u attack'd our general mother, as he endeavour'd to work her up to an imagination, that it was through envy that God debar'd her husband and her from eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge, lest they should be like him in knowledge, he labour'd to raise pride in her, by assuring her, that if she once tasted of the fruit which she fear'd to touch, she should tow'r to divinity, or be like God in knowledge. What he urged was this; " God knows that in the day you eat of it, then your eyes shall be open'd, and you shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil." It was this sly suggestion that made the first of women look with eager longing eyes on

the goodly fruit, which hung on the forbidden tree ; and it was a persuasion that she should rise in knowledge, which induced her, in an evil hour, to reach forth her rash hand, to pluck and eat what plunged her into ruin. And it is very likely, by urging the arguments which the devil had used to induce her to undo herself, that she prevailed on our common father to follow her example, out of a vain conceit of having a part with her in her imagin'd happiness, and so to complete the first transgression. It must be own'd, that our first parents did gain knowledge by eating the forbidden fruit, but it was knowledge they had better have been without ; it was an experimental knowledge of what was evil. They soon found their eyes open'd ; but what was this to discover ? It was to shew them, that their minds were darken'd, that innocence, which, as a veil had shaded them from knowing ill, was gone, that they had lost the image of their mighty Maker, which before shone in them, in wisdom and severe and pure sanctity, that they were stripp'd of their just confidence, primitive integrity, original righteousness, and native honour, and that they were left naked to guilty shame. This was the unhappy prospect which presented it self to them, when they first

open'd their eyes to behold evil ; and this knowledge may be said to be dearly bought, by the loss of pleasures and joys, which were sufficient to satiate their craving desires, and would, if they had continued in honour, have lasted for ever.

Thus we find from scripture, that pride and self-sufficiency have been the causes of all the evils, which have infested the intellectual world ; of the apostacy of many thousands of the princes of light, and of the defection of our first parents, by which sin and woe have been entail'd on us their unhappy posterity : And when we see such direful effects following pride, if we regard our true interest, we shall stand at a distance from a sin that is so affronting to God. When men cry up the sufficiency of reason ; when they refuse to assent to the mysteries of revelation, because they cannot comprehend the manner of them ; and when they will not be content without being wise above what is written ; they only follow the example of the angels that sinn'd, and of the first man, who, when he was in honour, continued not, but made himself and his posterity more miserable than the brutes that perish : They shew they are under the influence of that impure apostate spirit, who seduced their first parents to break the covenant with their God,
and

and that they are the true descendents of the unhappy pair, who lost their primæval glory, out of a foolish desire of being independent on God, and knowing more than he thought fit to reveal. Considering these things, let not us be lifted up with pride, on the account of our rational attainments, but let us be humbled from a sense of the imperfection of our reason, and let a sense of this imperfection put us upon thinking on our fall and apostacy from God: let us be thankful that we are not left to the dim light of nature, but that we have a more sure directory, in the written law of God, than could be obtain'd by us, if we were left to the guidance of our own reason: let us prize and value the scriptures, which give us an account of our salvation by Christ; let us search into them, and, with reverence, receive the mysteries which are reveal'd in them, which may be above our full comprehension; but let us never attempt to be wise above what is written, by affecting to know the mode of those mysteries which is not reveal'd; and let us, at all times, be much in prayer to the Holy Spirit, that he would give us light into those great things of God, which the natural man receives not, but accounts foolishness, and which the man of mere

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rational attainments will never know, because they are spiritually discerned.

Now to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, three divine Persons, but the one King eternal, immortal, invifible, and the only wife God, be honour and glory afcribed, henceforth. and for evermore. Amen.





S E R M O N II.

ROM. i. 22.

*Professing themselves to be wise,
they became fools.*

IF we take for true the scripture account of the fall of our first parents, we shall find, that the desire of knowing more than God had revealed, was the spring of that apostacy from the author of blessedness, the sad effects of which defection we now feel, and shall feel, as long as we continue our journey through this tiresome wilderness; where we meet with very little that is truly comfortable, but are forced, after climbing up rocks of perils, to
 G 4 descend

descend and stray through vales of tears. Had our common parents been content with their happy lot, sin and its concomitant death had never enter'd the world; we should have had no trouble to grieve us, nor afflictions to harrafs and distress us, but we should have spent our easy hours in blessing and praying the beneficent Creator, and our time would have pleasantly glided away in the service of the mighty Potentate, that gave us our being; who would have made every thing about us have tended to our comfort. When man was clad in honour, and was a happy creature, he was not content with his desirable station, but aspired after an independence on his Maker; he was ambitious to be as God, knowing good and evil; he vainly thought, by gratifying his own will, to tower to divinity, and, by transgressing the law of his supreme Lord, to be like him in knowledge: but alas! he was greatly mistaken; he lost the knowledge of what is good, and, to his cost, found that he had acquired the experimental knowledge of what was evil. As we partake of the curse which he entail'd upon us, so the temper which prevail'd in him, when he first imagin'd that it was out of envy, lest he should become his equal, that God had debar'd him the fruit of one tree, has the predominance in all his miserable posterity, if
they

they are left to themselves, and are given up to the guidance of their imperfect reason. Pride so much possesses the heart of men, in their degenerate state, that tho' they can never bring themselves to believe that they are stronger than God, and able to cast him from his throne, yet they evidence that they grieve to see his glory, and earnestly desire to be independent on him. Were not the disputers of this world sway'd by obdurate pride, and were not their hearts fill'd with envy, hatred, and rancour against God, then would they ever suggest, that they are not accountable to that supreme being who created them, who preserves them from outward harms and dangers, and whose goodness keeps them every moment from death and destruction? What detestible arrogance is it for the contemptible reptils of the earth, to say, that he who formed out of nothing, has not any thing to do with those on whom he has bestow'd an existence? Yet to such a height is daring infidelity come, that reason must be set up as a perfect rule, tho' men are granted to be more sway'd by their passions than by reason, and the distinctions of right and wrong are given out to be independent of the will of God, and to be founded on we know not what nature of things.

What

What has been of late advanced in favour of reason, amounts to no more than this, reason ought to be a perfect rule, therefore it is a perfect rule, and a perfect rule needs no addition; therefore all which God has reveal'd, which reason could not have found out, is impertinent and needless. If this matter is brought to a fair trial, the religion of nature must not be consider'd as men have pieced it up, by the help of scripture, but in the state in which it has been among able thinking and polish'd men, who had no other helps than such as reason furnish'd them with, and had no correspondence with such as had their reason enlarged, by the help of the oracles of God. And if it is thus weigh'd, which is weighing it in the balance of truth and justice, it will be found wanting. They who have made the greatest improvements in natural religion, were quite confounded as to many points, which must be own'd to be of the utmost consequence, and the last concern to men in their depraved state.

If we were fairly to examine the matter of fact, or consider how sufficient or insufficient the light of nature has appear'd to be, we should confine our selves strictly, to such as we have the firmest evidence to conclude, were left without any assistance gain'd by intercourse with those
who

who had the benefit of revelation, or even by commerce with them that had opportunity to borrow a little light from them. If we were to take the standard of the light of nature from such nations as the Chinese, and the inhabitants of Japan, though we must allow them to be as well bred people, as nice and curious in the manual arts, and as completely skill'd in trade, as any of the polish'd nations of the west, yet we should find they have run into the most gross and irrational errors about the worship of God ; and though some good moral precepts have been deliver'd by Xanfu, or Confucius, yet many vile notions, as to practical duties are received among them. We know not what intercourse there might be formerly between them and the eastern nations, that lay nearer to the places which were the seats of true knowledge ; so that it cannot be said, that what good things they receive, they found out without help. The easiest way to judge, whether reason, in the present state of mankind, is a sufficient rule, in matters of religion, is to examine how far it is a good guide to the inhabitants of North America, who had no commerce with any other nations, before the Europeans settled there, and had no helps farther than what nature dictated. If reason is view'd as it exerts itself in them, who yet are a quick,

quick, and not a stupid sort of people, it will appear to be far from being a sufficient guide.

When we consent to try the merits of the cause, by the writings of such Pagans as lived in Greece and at Rome, before Christ, it is allowing more than the pleaders for the sufficiency of reason can demand of us. After Cyrus, king of Persia, had conquer'd Croesus, king of Lydia, and made Asia the less a province of his great dominions, there was more intercourse between the eastern nations and the Greeks, than was before. We have only two Pagan writers before this period, Homer and Hesiod, who embraced the system of theology invented by Orpheus; and as he had borrow'd some things from the Egyptians, which they had from the Israelites, so, in the writings of these two Poets, there are some traces of eastern knowledge. After Cyrus's time, the Greeks knew more of the eastern affairs than before, and some of their most eminent philosophers, and most ancient writers, travel'd into Syria and Egypt; so that it is no wonder if we find some things in them, consonant to what we meet with in the scriptures of the Old Testament. Joseph, in his apology for the Jewish religion, Justin, Tatian, Theophilus, Tertullian, Minutius Felix, and Origen, in their defences of Christianity, charged

charged the Pagans with borrowing their best notions from the Old Testament, and arraign'd them of ingratitude, for not owning from whence they had assistance ; the same matter was more distinctly pursued by the learned Clement of Alexandria, by Lactantius, and the great Eusebius : but none among the Ancients have handled this point with more judgment, than that rational and polite divine, Theodorit; he has left us an admirable treatise^a, wherein he, with a great deal of strength of argument, with an agreeable variety of learning, and, in most elegant and nervous diction, has proved, that the most celebrated philosophers among the Greeks had borrow'd their most elevated speculations concerning the true God from the^b Jews. The Romans had all their philosophy from the Greeks, so that they only have copied out such as were but copies themselves. It is therefore making farther concessions than we are obliged to do, for us to take the ancient Greek and Roman writers for the standard by which we judge of the insufficiency of reason.

^a His *Therapeuticks* in twelve books, in the fourth volume of his works.

^b This matter has, since my engaging in this subject; been well stated by my worthy and learned friend, Dr. Waterland, in his charge to the clergy of *Middlesex*, p. 10, &c.

However,

Of the Insufficiency of

However, if we find, that, notwithstanding the helps the ancient Pagans had, natural religion was far from being a sufficient guide, in sacred matters, our cause will not lose, but gain, by thus trying reason. I shall wave considering what improvements were made by such writers as Seneca, Epictetus, Arian, the emperor Antonius, or the later Platonists, because they lived after Christianity was spread over the world ; and, as the modern delineators of natural religion have since done, took from thence what they liked. I shall confine my self principally, though not wholly, to what Socrates's scholars have preserved from him, and to the writings of Plato. It must be own'd, these two men had far better notions, as to some things, than any of the other Heathens ; but yet they, and all other Pagans, had very dark and obscure conceptions about the unity and worship of God, the creation of the world, the corruption of mankind, the way to be reconciled to an offended God, the nature of virtue, and a future state. These are points which are of the utmost concern to all persons, at all times ; as to these, the wisest among the Gentiles were puzzled and perplex'd, which would not have been the case, if natural religion had been a sufficient guide. That they were actually at a loss about these momen-

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tous things, will clearly appear, if we take an impartial survey.

I. The light of nature convinces men that there is one supreme Being, who brought all other beings into existence, and that he is to be worshipp'd; but when men have been left to bare reason, without supernatural aids, they have had very obscure notions of this one supreme God, and have run into things really inconsistent with the belief of the one supreme, though at the same time they were forced to own there was such an one.

It is certain, from the light of nature, that there is a God, possess'd of infinite perfections. The works of creation proclaim their great original: If we look to the sun, that fountain of light and heat, we must own, that it was one of infinite power, who prepared a tabernacle for it, that its influences might be convey'd to the heavenly bodies which move round it; if we consider the planets, which, with regular motions, revolve about it, we cannot but confess the wisdom of him who made them, who nicely adjusted their distances, that they might not disturb one another in their motions, and who enables them to perform their several revolutions: It was an almighty arm that first slung forth those great bodies, which have been kept

kept from following the propensity of gravity, to fall to their center, by the projectile force impress'd upon them by an all-powerful hand. If we take a survey of the earth, on which we tread, we see in it such footsteps of skill, power, and contrivance, that we cannot but say the hand which made it is divine; it must be one of skill, who has enrich'd it with the beautiful and useful variety of land and sea, plains and rivers, hills and vales, trees and flowers, corn and fruit, shady groves and chrystal springs, painted meadows and purling streams: Every part of the inanimate creation, which raises pleasure in our imagination, may prove the being of God to us; whether it be the beautiful and variegated profusion of flowers that adorns the delightful gardens, the gay enamel that paints the agreeable meadows, or the curious drapery that vests the shady groves. If we consider the tribes of brute creatures, they manifest to us the greatness of their Maker: If we regard our selves, we cannot but say we are fearfully and wonderfully made; therefore when we ruminate on the exquisite art, and consummate workmanship, which is laid out in the formation of our bodies, and on the nobler part of us, that thinking, intelligent substance, that distinguishes from brutes, we cannot but conclude that we have a Creator of infinite power.

When

When we think on the works of nature, with any exactness, we cannot but conclude, that there is a supreme Potentate, who ^cmade and upholds the heavens, the earth, the seas, and all things therein, who gives to all life and breath, in whom we live, move, and have our being, and who has not left himself without witness to the consciences of any, seeing, by his bounty, he sustains the sons of men, and fills their hearts with food and gladness. This has been the belief of all refined nations ; and it has not been proved ^d, that any people have been yet discover'd, who are so over-run with ignorance and barbarism, as to have no notion of a power above them. David has, indeed, ^e told us, that “ The fool has said in his heart there is no God ;” but this may be understood of his secret wishing that there was no God, and being ready sometimes to flatter himself with the hopes that things are as he wishes : Or

^c Acts xiv. 15, 17. and xvii. 25, 28.

^d The Atheists have boasted of their having found out a people who have no notion of a superior power, the Hottentots about the Cape of Good Hope. We need not much grudge them the honour of having their opinions patronized, by those, who are, as far as we know, the most beastly and lazy of the human race ; but, however, they are not so far brutified, as to have no belief of any thing above them ; as any one may find, who consults M. Kolben's account of the Cape of Good Hope, lately translated into English, tho' in a very foolish manner.

^e Psal. xiv. 1.

rather, this fool of nature may be reckon'd a person who has denied his reason so far, as to bring himself to believe, that he was not made by God for himself, and that he has no motive, on his own account, to give him laws, and to punish the breach of them, and that consequently he is not accountable to him.

We have a very pregnant and melancholic proof of the imperfection of the light of nature, since the fall, in the unworthy representations some of the Heathen world gave of God, and the hideous and blemishing fictions they invented concerning him. Though they knew him in part from his works, they glorified him not as God, but grew vain in their imaginations, and introduced a rabble of inferior deities, whom they represented as not free from vicious passions, and they acted so much beneath the dignity of human nature, as to bow down before stones and logs. They worship'd the creature, besides the Creator, that is, with subordinate worship, and so invented the irrational scheme of subordinate gods, and inferior worship, which has been so much applauded for refined reason, by many of their foolish disciples, who call themselves Christians. The picture of the ancient Heathens is most admirably drawn by the apostle Paul, that great demolisher of Paganism, in the following

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ing ^f words: “ What may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shew’d it them ; for the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were they thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darken’d, professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. They changed the truth of God into a lye, and worship’d and served the creature besides the Creator, who is God blessed for ever.” What can shew more the insufficiency of the light of nature, to be a rule to men in matters of religion, than this, that such as were convinced from the works of God that there was a supreme God, of eternal power, should venture to worship with him, and besides him, idols, and that not only images of men, the noblest creatures of the lower world, but besides these, logs of wood, and blocks of marble cut into the shapes of the

^f Rom. i. 19—23, 25.

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most contemptible creatures, such as serpents, nay, of monsters, such as are only the creatures of fancy, and have no existence in nature. And this was done not only by the rude vulgar, but by the politest men among the Pagans.

It must be own'd, that some of the Pagans have spoke admirably well [§] concerning the supreme God, and have described him in a worthier manner, than many who might have used the advantage of a better light, who suppose that we are to have no farther notion of God, than of one invested with dominion; this shews, that though the light of nature, by which men have a notion of God, is much eclipsed, by the darkness introduced by the fall, yet it is not quite extinguished. But though the Pagans have said a great many good things about the supreme, yet they never had any notion how affronting it was to the universal and the sole Potentate, to have any part of his glory given to others. We have many noble passages remaining, both of the poets and philosophers, which shew, that the knowledge of a God of

[§] I might have given here testimonies from the Ancients, especially from the poets, wherein they have spoke exceeding well of the supreme God; but I have formerly collected many of the most remarkable passages, and thrown them into the margin of my Treatise of faith, p. 12—17. thither therefore I shall beg leave to refer the reader.

infinite perfections, was not quite obliterated, which it would be endless to produce; but we do not find that this rational light, which, on some accounts, shined in them with great clearness, was sufficient to keep them from running into most gross absurdities. We may be contented, on this head, and on others, to take a view of the sentiments of Socrates, who has been stiled a martyr for the unity of God; and has been, by a late ^h writer, whose pretended religion was only the bible, very profanely, set in the same rank with Job. This man, it must be own'd, was a judicious observer of mens actions; and, as he studied human nature

^h The late Dr. Samuel Clarke, whose mean and low words are these following: "There have been in almost every age, in the Heathen world, some wise, and brave, and good men, who have made it their business to study and practise the duties of natural religion themselves, and so teach and exhort others to do the like. An eminent instance whereof, in the eastern nations, the scripture affords us in the history of Job.—Among the Greeks, Socrates seems to be an extraordinary example of this kind." *Evidences of Natural and Reveal'd Religion*, Prop. VI. It will appear, that there was no room for this betrayer of revelation to depress Job so far, as to make him an instance of the same kind with Socrates, if we consider that the Heathen philosopher died as a fool died, using this mean expression; "Crito, we are indebted a cock to Aesculapius; offer it, and do not forget." Whereas the scripture-hero had light to make the following noble declaration, "If I had beheld the sun when it shined, and the moon walking in brightness, and my heart had been secretly enticed, or my mouth had kissed my hand, this had been an iniquity to have been punished by the magistrate, for I should have deny'd the God that is above." Job xxxi. 26, 27, 28,

exactly, so he did not set himself to frame schemes in private, which was the ruin of most of the other old philosophers: In this he took as good a method, as could be expected from one in his circumstances, and did not run into such great absurdities, as most other Heathens. In a conversation with an Atheist, he ⁱ argued for the being of

ⁱ The noble debate, as Xenophon has preserved it, is very well worth producing.

Λέξω ὃ πρῶτον ἂν πῶς αὐτῷ ἤκουσα πρὸ τοῦ Δαυμονίου Δια-
λεγομένου πρὸς Αἰσιόδημον ἢ Μικρὸν ἐπικαλούμενον· κα-
ταμαθὼν γὰρ αὐτὸν ἔτε θύοντα τοῖς Θεοῖς, ἔτε μαθη-
κῇ χρώμενον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ ποιέειν ταῦτα κατὰ βέλους.
Εἰπέ μοι, ἔφη, ὦ Αἰσιόδημε, ἔστιν ἕστινας ἀνθρώπων τεθαύ-
μακας ἐπὶ σοφία; Ἐγὼ γάρ, ἔφη. Καὶ οὗ, λέξον ἡμῖν, ἔφη,
τὰ ὀνόματα αὐτῶν. Ἐπὶ μὲν τίνων ἐπὶ τῶν ποιήσας Ὀμηρον
ἔγωγε μάλιστα τεθαύμακα, ἐπὶ δὲ διδυράμβω Μεναιτι-
πίδῳ, ἐπὶ δὲ τραγῳδίᾳ Σοφοκλείᾳ, ἐπὶ δὲ ἀνδριανιστοίᾳ
Πολύκλειστον, ἐπὶ δὲ ὡσεσοῦτα Ζεῦσιν. Πότερὰ σοι δοκεῖσιν
οἱ ἀπερὶ ζώοντων εἰδῶλα ἀφρονά τε καὶ ἀκίνητα, ἀξιοθαυμα-
στότεροι εἶναι, ἢ οἱ ζῶα ἐμφρονά τε καὶ ἐνεργά; Πολὺν μὲν Δία
οἱ ζῶα, εἰ πῶς γὰρ μὴ τύχη τινί, ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ γνώμης ταῦτα
γενέσθαι. Τῶν δὲ ἀτεκμαίρων ἐχόντων ὅτε ἐνέκα ὅτι, καὶ τῷ
φανερῶς ἐπὶ ἀφελείᾳ ὄντων, πότερὰ τύχης καὶ πότερὰ γνώμης
ἔργα κείνεις; Πρέπει μὲν τὰ ἐπὶ ἀφελείᾳ γινόμενα γνώμης
εἶναι ἔργα. Οὐκ ἔν δοκεῖ σοι ἐξ ἀρχῆς ποιῶν ἀνθρώπους, ἐπὶ
ἀφελείᾳ περὶ εἶναι αὐτοῖς δι' ὧν αἰετάνον; ἔκαστα, ὁθαλα-
μὸς μὲν ὧδ' ὁρᾷν τὰ ὀρεῖα; ὧτα δὲ ὧδ' ἀκούειν τὰ ἀκυσά;
ῥομῶν γὰρ μὲν, εἰ μὴ ῥῖνες προσετέθησαν, τί ἂν ἡμῖν ὄφελος
ἦν; τίς δ' ἂν αἰδήσειεν ἢν γλυκεῶν, καὶ δειμῶν, καὶ πάντων
ἢν διὰ νόμον ἴδῃ, εἰ μὴ γλῶττα τέτων γνώμων ἐνε-
ργάσθαι; πρὸς δὲ τέτοις, εἰ δοκεῖ σοι καὶ τόδε πρηνείας ἔργον
εὐκρίναι, τὸ, ἐπεὶ ἀδενὴς μὲν ἐσιν ἡ ὄψις, βλεφάροις αὐτῶν
θυρεῖσαι, αἱ, ὅταν μὲν αὐτῇ χρῆσθαι τι δεῖ, ἀναπελαινῇ,
ἐν δὲ τῷ ὕπνῳ συγκαλεῖ; ὥς δ' ἂν μὴδὲ ἀνέμοι βλάπτω-
σιν, ἢ δὲ μὲν βλεφαρίδας ἐμφῦσαι, ὁρῶσι τε ἀπογεῖναι τὰ
ὑπὸ τῷ ὀμμάτων, ὥς μὴδ' ὅτι τῷ κεφαλῇ ἰδρὸς κακὴ γῆ-
ρῶν δὲ ἀκρωτὶ δέχεσθαι μὴ πᾶσας φανᾶς, ἐκπέπλευσεν δὲ μὴ

of a God, from the wisdom and skill which are to be seen in the works of nature, especially in the formation of man's body; and, when he came to closer reasoning with him, he used this warm manner: "Have you any degree of knowledge? Do you think there is no superior knowledge elsewhere? Can you think that the great and innumerable wonders of your frame were put into such a beautiful order, merely by blind chance?" When the infidel objected, that he could not see the author of

πολλὰ καὶ τὰς μὴν πρὸς τὸν ὁδόντας πᾶσι ζώοις οἷος τέμνειν
εἶναι, τὰς δὲ γομφίους, οἷος πρὸς τὰς δὲ ζῶας δὲ ζῶας λεαίνων
καὶ σῶμα μὴν, δι' ἃ, ὡς ἐπιθυμῶν τὰ ζῶα, εἰσπύμπει, πη-
σίον ὁφθαλμῶν καὶ ῥινῶν καθαίνειν· ἐπεὶ δὲ τὰ ἀποχρηστικά
δυσχερῆ, ἀπορρέει τὰς τέτων ὀχετὸς, καὶ ἀπενεγκῆν ἢ διω-
τὸν περιστάτω ἀπὸ τῆς αἰδήσεως· ταῦτα ἔγωγε περὶ τοῦ
πεπερασμένου ἀπορρεῖς πότερος τύχης ἢ γνώμης ἔργα εἶναι;
Οὐ μὰ τὸ Δί', ἔφη, ἀλλ' ἔγωγε σκοπεύων πάντῃ εἰσὶν
ταῦτα σοφῶς τινὲς δημιουργοὶ καὶ φιλοζῶες τεχνήμασι· τὸ δὲ
ἐμφύσαι μὴν ἔρωτα τῇ τεκνοποιίᾳ, ἐμφύσαι δὲ τῇ γενναμύᾳ
ἔρωτα τῇ ἐκτρέφειν, τοῖς δὲ τραφεῖσι μέγιστον μὴ πόθον τῷ ζῆν,
μέγιστον δὲ φόβον τῷ θανάτῳ· ἀμέλει καὶ ταῦτα εἰσὶν μηχαν-
ήμασί τινος ζῶα εἶναι βελούσα μύη. Σὺ δὲ σαυτὸν φρονι-
μὸν τι δοκεῖς ἔχειν; ἔρωτα γὰρ, καὶ ἀποκρινέμαι· ἄλλοθι
δὲ ἑδάμῃ ἐδὲν οἷος φρονιμον εἶναι; καὶ ταῦτα εἰδὼς, ὅτι γῆς
τε μικρὸν μέρος ἐν τῷ σώματι, πολλῆς ἔσσης, ἔχεις, καὶ
ὕγρῃ βραχὺ, πολλὰ ὄντος, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων δὴ περὶ μεγάλων ὄν-
των ἐκάστω μικρὸν μέρος λαβόντι τὸ σῶμα σωήσεσθαι σοι
νῦν δὲ μόνον ἄρα ἑδάμῃ ὄντα σε δὴ τυχεῖς πῶς δοκεῖς σωαρ-
πάσαι; καὶ τὰδε ὑπερμεγέθη καὶ πολλὰ ἀπειρα, δι' ἀφρο-
σύλῳ τινὰ ὡς οἷος δὴ τέλει ἔχειν; Μὰ Δί', ἔφη. Οὐ γὰρ
ὁρῶ τὰς κυεῖς, ὥστε τῇ ἐνθάδε γινομένων τὰς δημιουργίας.
Οὐδὲ γὰρ τῇ αὐτῇ σύ γε ἡσυχῇ ὄρας, ἢ τῇ σώματι κυεῖα
εἶναι· ὥς καὶ γὰρ τὸ τοῦ ἐξ ἐσὶ σοι λέγειν, ὅτι ἐδὲ γνώμη,
ἀλλὰ τύχη πάντῃ πρὸς τὴν.

of nature, the philosopher answer'd, that the objector could not see his own soul, which animated and govern'd his body; so that he might as well say that it was merely by chance, and not by design, that he perform'd all rational, as well as animal functions. This disputer was not able to maintain that there was no God, but only would have insinuated, that God had not made man for himself, or design'd him to be accountable to him; he did not despise a God, but he thought he was too glorious

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ἔφη, ἐγὼ δὲ Σώκρατες, ὑπορῶ τὸ Δαιμόνιον, ἀλλ' ἐκείνων
μεγαλοπρεπέστερον ἡγέμαι, ἢ ὅς τ' ἐμῆς θεωρίας περὶ
θεῶν. Οὐκ ἂν, ἔφη, ὅσα μεγαλοπρεπέστερον αὐτοὶ σε θεω-
ροῦν, τοσέτω μάλλον τιμητέον αὐτό. Εὐ ἰδί, ἔφη, ὅτι
εἰ νομίζοιμι θεὸς ἀνθρώπων τι φροντίζειν, ἐκ αὐτῶν ἀμελοῖμαι
αὐτῶν· ἐπεὶ ἐκ οἷς φροντίζειν, οἱ πρῶτον μὴ μόνον τὸ ζῶν
ἀνθρώπον ὁρᾶν ἀνέστησαν, (ἢ ὃ ὁρθότης καὶ θεωρεῖν πλεον
ποιεῖ δυνάμει, καὶ τὰ ὑπερθεῖν μάλλον θεῶν, καὶ ἥτιον κακο-
παθεῖν) καὶ ὅτι, καὶ ἀκοῇ, καὶ σόμα ἐνεποίησαν; ἔπειτα τοῖς
μὴ ἀλλοῖς ἐρπετοῖς πόδας ἔδωκαν, οἱ τὸ πορδέειν μόνον πα-
ρέχουσιν· ἀνθρώπῳ δὲ καὶ χεῖρας προσέθεσαν, αὐτὰ πλεον,
οἷς δίδαιμονέτεροι ἐκείνων ἐσμὲν, ἐξεργάζοντο; καὶ μὴ
γλωττῶν τε πλεον τὸ ζῶν ἐχόντων, μόνῳ δὲ τῷ ἀν-
θρώπῳ ἐποίησαν, ὅταν ἄλλοις ἀλλαχῇ φαύσαντες εὖ
μαλ' ἄρθεαν τε τὸ φωνῆν, καὶ σημαίνειν πάντα ἀλλήλοις
ἀβελόμεθα. — Οὐ τοίνυν μόνον ἤκεσε πᾶσι θεῶν
σώματ' ἐπιμεληθῆναι, ἀλλὰ (ὅπερ μέγιστον ἐστὶ) καὶ τὴν ψυ-
χῶν κρατίστῳ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐξέτισε. Τιν' οὖν ἄλλος ζῶν
ψυχὴν πρῶτα μὴ θεῶν, τὴν τὰ μέγιστα καὶ κάλλιστα σωτα-
ξάντων, ἢ ὅτι; ὅτι εἰσὶ; τί δὲ φύλον ἄλλο, ἢ ἀνθρώποι, θεὸς
θεωρεῖται; ποῖα δὲ ψυχὴ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἱκανώτερον θεωρεῖται
ἀνθρώπου, ἢ λιμὸν, ἢ δίψαν, ἢ ψυχὴν, ἢ θάλασσαν, ἢ νόσους ἐπι-
κρῆσαι, ἢ ῥάμῳ ἀσκήσαι, ἢ θεωρεῖται; ἢ ἴδμεν, ἢ μάθωμεν, ἢ
ὅσα αὐτῶν ἀνέστη, ἢ ἴδμεν, ἢ μάθωμεν, ἢ ἴδμεν, ἢ μάθωμεν;
Οὐ γὰρ πάντες σοὶ κατέδδον, ὅτι πλεον τὰ ἄλλα ζῶν ὡς

θεοῖς

a Being to need his worship: He had a good answer to this, that the greater and more glorious the Being was, which deigned to take care of him, the more he ought to honour him. When he reply'd, that he did not think that God took care of human affairs, he was well confuted, by what might be seen of God's care, concerning man, in ordering the members of his body in such a manner, as shew'd him to be more the favourite of providence, than any of the brute creatures, in giving him an upright posture, and the use of

Θεοὶ ἄνθρωποι βιοῦσιν, φύσει καὶ τῷ σώματι καὶ τῇ ψυχῇ κεχρησμένοι; ἔτε γὰρ βοὸς ἂν ἔχων σῶμα, ἀνθρώπου ὃ γινώσκω, ἠδυνάτο ἂν περὶ τὴν αἰσθησίν· ἔτι ὅσα χεῖρας ἔχει, ἀφ' ὧν δ' ἐστὶ, πλείον ἐδύνετο ἔχει· σὺ δ' ἀμφοτέρων τ' ἀλλήλων ἀξίων τελευτήσας, καὶ οἷον σὲ Θεὸς ἐπιμελῆσθαι; ἀλλ' ὅταν τι ποιήσῃ, νομίζεις αὐτὸς σὲ φροντίζειν. — Οἱ δ' ἂν τοὺς Θεοὺς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους διέξαν ἐμφύσει, ὡς ἱκανοὶ εἶσιν εὖ καὶ κακῶς ποιεῖν, εἰ μὴ δυνάτοί ἦσαν; καὶ ἀνθρώπους ἐξαπατῶντες, καὶ πάντα χρόνον ἐδέετο ἂν αἰδέσθαι; ἔχ' ὅρας ὅτι τὰ πολυχρονιώτα καὶ σοφώτατα τῷ ἀνθρωπίνῳ, πλείους καὶ ἔδνη, θεοσεβέστατα ἔστι, καὶ αἱ φρονιμώτα ἡλικίᾳ, Θεῶν ἐπιμελῆστα; ὦ γὰρ δὲ (ἔφη) καλὰ μαθεῖς, ὅτι καὶ ὁ σὺς νῦν ἐνὼν τὸ σὸν σῶμα, ὅπως βέλεται, μετὰ χεῖρας; οἷός τις ἐν χερσὶ καὶ τῷ ἐν παντὶ φρονήσει τὰ πάντα, ὅπως ἂν αὐτῇ ἡδύη, ἔτω τίς τις; καὶ μὴ τὸ σὸν μὲν ὅμμα δυνάμει ἐπὶ πολλὰ σάδια ἐξικνεῖται, καὶ τὸ Θεὸς ὁσθαλμὸν ἀδύνατον εἶναι ἅμα πάντα ὁρᾶν· μηδὲ τὴν σὴν μὲν ψυχὴν καὶ πᾶσι τῷ ἐνθάδε καὶ πᾶσι τῷ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ ἐν Σικελίᾳ δυνάμει φροντίζειν, καὶ τὸ Θεὸς φρονήσει μὴ ἱκανὸν εἶναι ἅμα πάντα ἐπιμελῆσθαι. Ἦν μὲν τοι, — τῷ Θεῷ πᾶσαν λαμβάνεις δευπαλίῳ, εἴ τι σοὶ θελήσει· πᾶσι δ' ἀδύνατον ἀνθρώποις συμβεβῆκεν, γινώσκῃ τὸ Θεῶν, ὅτι τοσῶτον ὅν ἐστιν, ὥστε ἅμα πάντα ὁρᾶν, καὶ πάντα αἰεῖν, καὶ πανταχῇ παρῆναι, καὶ ἅμα πάντων ἐπιμελῆσθαι αὐτὸς. Xenophon Memorabl. Socrat. Lib. I. c. 4. p. 59—66. Ed. Londin. Oper. Vol. IV. p. 43—40. Edit. Oxon.

speech;

speech ; and, above this, by what might be observed of the divine kindness, in giving man a rational soul, of a noble nature, capable of discerning the works of providence, and the divine proceedings, as to worldly matters, and fitted to conduct the body, as to the common affairs of life ; that man may guard against hunger, thirst, heat, cold, and sickness, that he may acquire knowledge, and keep in memory what he has attained ; when it was objected, that it was not likely that God should see and know all things, it was well replied in these words : “ Your soul, whilst in the body, governs it at its will, therefore it may be concluded, that the wisdom which resides in the universe, governs all things at pleasure, your eye can take in the compass of some furlongs ; and cannot the eye of God view all things at once ? Your mind can think on the state of affairs, in different parts of the world, and cannot the wisdom of God take care of all things ? If you will wait for divine direction to guide you, into things which carry an obscure face, you will know, that the Deity is so great, as to be able to see and hear all things, to be present every where, and to take the care of all things.” Reason dictated to this man more than it does to some of our modern pleaders for its perfection, yet in him it was woefully deficient ;

cient; for he join'd ^k in the worship of false gods, and pleaded for omens, divinations by sacrifices, and birds; and, when he came to die, for his having a little better notion of the divine being than his contemporaries, he ^l dishonourably finish'd his course with desiring his friends to fulfil a vow for him, which was to offer a cock to the feigned power of health.

Some of the wiser Pagans own'd, that God was the Creator of all things; and where-ever they had their light, whether by tradition, or conversation in the east, some of them allow'd, that the world ^m was form'd out of a confused chaos, but they were frank to confess, that they knew not which of the gods it was, that condescended to take the trouble to raise the beautiful

^k Θύων θανερὸς ὤ, πολλάκις μὲν οἴκοι, πολλάκις ἐπὶ ἱερῶν τ' ἐπὶ πύλαις βωμῶν, καὶ μαντικῇ χρώμενοι ἐκ ἀφανὲς ὤ. Xenophon Memorabil. Socrat. Lib. I. cap. 1. p. 18. Edit. Londin. Oper. Vol. IV. p. 1, 2. Edit. Oxon.

^l Ἡδὲ ἔν γε δὲν τὶ αὐτῶν τὰ περὶ τὸ ἥτερον ψυχρόμενα· καὶ ἐκκαλυψάμενοι, ἐν ἐκκαλυπτοῖσι, εἶπεν, ὃ ὅ τελευτᾶτον ἐφθέρχεται. Ω Κεῖται, ἔφη, τῷ Ασκληπιδί ὀφείλομαι ἀλεκτρυόνα, ἀλλὰ ἀπόδοτε καὶ μὴ ἀμελήσατε. Platonis Phaedo, cap. 49. p. 186. Ed. Cant. Vol. I. p. 118. Ed. Steph. p. 87. Ed. Franf.

^m Ante mare & terras & quod tegit omnia coelum,
Unus erat toto naturae vultus in orbe,
Quem dixere chaos, rudis indigestaque moles.

Ovid. Metam. Lib. I. v. 5.

Sic ubi dispositam, quisquis fuit ille Deorum,
Congeriem secuit, sectamque in membra redegit.

Ibid. v. 32.

fabric

fabric of the world, out of a rude indigested heap, and to bring order out of confusion. This was only the notion of some; for others held, with a noted ⁿ modern, that the world was God; others, with ^o one of our country, imagined that all things were by fatal necessity, and that, by the nature of things, every thing is which is; others fancied, that the world was co-eternal with God, a necessary emanation from him, or that matter was from eternity; others framed a notion of God, as a happy lazy indolent being, who was not concerned in the creation, or government of the world, but enjoy'd himself in supine ease, they supposed, that the world was framed by the casual hitting or jumbling of atoms, and that men had nothing to do, but to consult their own ease, to which some added, how to be inoffensive to others. It may be easily guess'd, from this short sketch, that none of the absurd opinions, which the later times have been pester'd with, are the growth of the more recent ages, but that they have been advanced and baffled long before this; and we need not question, but they may be often introduced afresh, and as often hiss'd off the stage, before the end of the world.

ⁿ Spinoza the atheistical Jew.
bury.

^o Hobbes of Malmf-

It might be a help to some giddy persons to know, that there is nothing in error which is really new; if they could be brought to believe this, they would not receive every absurdity, that carries a new face.

The providence of God was acknowledged by many, nay, by most of the Heathens, but they knew little of God's designs in afflicting a virtuous man, and suffering a vicious person to prosper; therefore some, being puzzled how to account for these things, framed a notion of two contrary^p principles, one good, and another evil, to the later they ascribed the troubles of the virtuous; these two principles were supposed to act in continual opposition one to another, and so to occasion all the confusion which is in the world: This irrational notion is inconsistent with the owning one infinitely supreme being, yet it met with a reception among some who were much civilized, and the remains of it are to be found among some ruder nations at this day.

If matters were always thus, it is a monstrous insult on common sense for

^p This notion was adopted by no less a person than Zerdusht, or Zoroaster, who, by the help of the prophetic writings, reformed, in some degree, the ancient Persian religion. Vide Hyde de Relig. Vet. Pers. c. 9.

our ^a modern betrayers of the Christian cause, into the hands of infidels, to tell us, that by the religion of nature men know what God is, and how he is to be worship'd. That God is to be worship'd, is the dictate of reason, and it has so striking a force upon the generality of men, that they will invent the most monstrous forms of worship, rather than not worship at all. A blockish idolater will have a log to crouch to, rather than be without a God, and some have been ready to sacrifice their fellow creatures, nay, their children, to avoid being reckon'd despisers of their false deities. They must be stupid to an amazing degree, and must only scribble for ideots, who can imagine, that any will believe them, who have examin'd the world, when they say, natural religion teaches men how to worship God. If we look into all the Pagan nations, we shall find, that a conviction of the necessity of worshipping what they reckon'd to be divine, and an entire ignorance how God is to be worship'd, was the cause of all those absurd, ridiculous, cruel, and sanguinary ways of worship, which they fell

^a See the Defence of the Answer to Dr. Waterland's Remarks on Clark's Exposition of the Catechism, said to be wrote by Sykes, p. 96.

into, and so shew'd that they were without excuse, in that when they knew God, from his works, they glorified him not as God.

II. If men consult their own hearts, they must needs find in themselves too strong a bias towards what is evil, and so must conclude, from experience, that man is in a state of corruption; seeing it cannot be thought, that he came at first out of his Maker's hands, with principles of rebellion infused into him, by the power that bestow'd on him his being. Though, by the light of nature, men have been convinced of their corruption, yet such as were left to it alone, had only confused notions about it, and so knew not how to reconcile the purity of God to the corruption of man. The Pagans, no doubt, had some traditionary hints about the apostacy of the angels, and the primitive pure state of man, which gave birth to the fables of the giants war against heaven, and the golden age; but their notions were so confused, that every one reckon'd himself at liberty to cloath them with what dress he pleased. Their fancy, that the golden age was ended, by the God that then ruled, as supreme, being driven from the reins of empire by his Son, shews how poor a light that of nature alone is. That we may not
seem

seem to charge those things as a defect in natural religion, which may be called dreams of the poets, let us examine the sentiments of Plato, the wisest and most penetrating philosopher among the Heathens, on this head : ^r He has told us, that
in

^r Τότε γὰρ αὐτῆς πρῶτον τὴ κυκλήσεως ἦρχεν ἐπιμελέ-
μεν· ὅλης δὲ Θεός, ὡς νῦν κατὰ τόπους ταυτὸν τὸτο ὑπὸ
Θεῶν ἀρχόντων πάντα τὰ τὰ κόσμους μέρη διεύλημμένα.
Καὶ δὴ καὶ τὰ ζῶα κατὰ γένη καὶ ἀγέλας οἱ νομῆες θεοὶ διε-
λήφθησαν δαίμονες αὐταρκῆς εἰς πάντα ἐκαστὸν ἐκάστοις
ὧν οἷς αὐτὸς ἐνεμῶν ὥς ἐστ' ἀγειον ὡς ἐδέν, οὔτε ἀλλήλων
ἐδωδαί. Πόλεμός τε ἐκ ἐνῆν, ἐδεσάσις τὸ παρῆπαν· ἀλλὰ
θ' ὅσα τ' τοιαύτης βῆ κατακοσμήσεως ἐπόρθη, μυεῖα αὖ
εἰν λέγειν. Τὸ δ' ἐν τῇ ἀνδρώπων λεχθὲν αὐτομάτε πα-
ρίε, διὰ τὸ τοῖονδε εἴρηται· Θεὸς ἐνεμῶν αὐτὰς, αὐτὸς ἐπι-
σαφῆς· καθάπερ νῦν ἀνδρωποὶ, ζῶον ὃν ἕτερον θεότερον,
ἀλλὰ γένη φαλότερα αὐτῇ νομένεσι· νεμὸν/· ἢ ἐκείνους,
πολίτῃαί τε ἐκ ἦσαν, ἐδὲ κλήσεις γυναῖκων καὶ παιδῶν,
ἐκ γῆς γὰρ ἀνεβίωσκόησιν πάντες, ἐδέν· μεμνημένοι τ' πρὸθεν·
ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν τοιαῦτα ἀπὴν πάντα· καρπὸς τὲ ἀφθόνους ἔχον
ὑπὸ τὲ δρυὼν καὶ πολλῆς ὕλης ἀλλης, ἔχ ὑπὸ γεωργίας εὐο-
μῆς, ἀλλ' αὐτομάτης ἀναδιδέσης τ' γῆς· γυμνοὶ ἢ καὶ ἀ-
νδρωποὶ, θυραυλῆντες τὰ πολλὰ ἐνέμοντο. Τὸ γὰρ τ' ὥρων
αὐτοῖς ἀλυτον ἐκέκρατο· μαλακὰς ἢ δυνὰς ἔχον ἀναφυο-
μῆς ἐκ γῆς πῶας ἀφθόνου. — Ἐπειδὴ πάντων τέτων
χερὸν/· ἐτελεσάθη, — τότε τὸ παντὸς ὁ κυβερνήτης οἷς πη-
δάτων οἶακ/· ἀξέμεν/·, εἰς τ' αὐτὰ πεικοπὴν ἀπέστη·
τ' ἢ κόσμον πάλιν ἀνέσσεφεν, εἰμαρμένη τε καὶ σύμφυτ/·
ἐπιθυμία. Πάντες ἐν οἱ καὶ τὰς τόπους συνάρχοντες, πᾶς με-
γίστω δαίμονι θεοῖ, γρόντες ἦδη τὸ γιγνομένων ἀφίεθ' αὐτὰ
μέρη τὰ κόσμους τ' αὐτῇ ἐπιμελείας. Ὁ ἢ μετασφροδόμεν/· καὶ
συμβάλλων, ἀρχῆς τε καὶ τελότης ἐναντίαν ὁρμὴν ὁρμη-
θεὶς σείσμον πολλὴν ἐν ἑαυτῷ ποιεῶν, ἀλλήν αὖ φθορὰν ζῶων
παντῶν ἀπεργάσατο. Μετὰ ἢ ταῦτα παρελθόν/· ἰκα-
νὲ χεῖρας, δορυβὰς τε καὶ ταραχῆς ἦδε πανόμην/· καὶ τ' σείσ-
μῳ, γαλήνης ἐπιλαβόμεν/·, εἰς τὲ τ' εἰσδόντα δερμὴν τ'
ἑαυτὸ καλὰσμενόμεν/· ἦε, ἐπιμέλειαν καὶ κατ'· ἔχον
αὐτὸς τ' ἐν, αὐτῷ τε καὶ ἑαυτῷ· τ' τὰ δημιουργῶ καὶ παρῆδος
ἐπομνημονεύων διδασχὴν εἰς δυνάμιν· κατ' ἀρχαῖς μὲν ἐν
ἀκεί-

in the primitive state, God govern'd the whole world immediately himself, and not as it is now, by inferior deities; that dæmons, or inferior spirits, as shepherds, had the care of the living creatures, which they ranged in due order; that there was then no ravaging or violence, war, or commotion in the earth; that God was the common guardian of men, and took care of their sustenance; that there was no need of civil society in those happy days; that men sprung out of the earth as trees; that the fields yielded fruit without tillage; and that the air was so temperate, that there was no need of cloaths: He has then acquainted us, that, after a time, the supreme God laid aside the reins of his empire, and retired, and with him all the inferior deities, who govern'd under him; that upon this the world was convulsed, and lost its beauty, and right and wrong were confounded; that these things will grow worse, till he who first govern'd the world, shall reduce it to a better state.

ἀκρίβειαν ἀνατίλει· τελευτῇ δ' ἀμειλύτερον. — Θεὸς δ' κοσμήσας αὐτὸν καθορῶν ἐν ὑπορίαις ὄντα, κηδόμενος ἵνα μὴ χεῖμασι, ὑπὸ ταραχῆς διαλυθεῖς, εἰς τὸ ἄνομοιότη-
τι ἀπερὼν ὄντα τόπον δύνῃ, πάλιν ἔφειδε αὐτῷ τὴν πηδα-
λίαν γιγνόμενον, τὰ νοήσαντα καὶ λυθέντα ἐν τῇ κατὰ αὐ-
τὸν πρωτέρα περὶ δωρεῖας, κοσμοῦ τε, καὶ ἐπανορθῶν, ἀ-
θάνατον αὐτὸν καὶ ἀγήρω ἀπεργάζεσθαι· τὸτο μὲν ἐν τελευ-
τῇ πάντων εἰρηται. Plato in Politico, Vol. II. p. 271, 272,
273. Edit. Steph. p. 537, 538. Ed. Francf.

This low and contemptible stuff is the utmost we can get, from such as were left to the light of nature, who yet had the help of eastern tradition. The same ¹ writer, in order to give an account of the origin of moral evil, has told us, that some of the inferior divinities, who fly after the chariot of the supreme, taking up with

¹ Ἦτις ἀν ψυχῇ Θεῷ ξυνοποδὲς γενομένη, κατίδῃ τῷ ἀληθῶν, μεκεῖ ὅ τ' ἐτέρας περὶδὲ εἶναι ἀπήμονα; καὶν αἰετὸ δῶνται ποιεῖν, αἰετὸ ἀβλαβὴ ἔῃ· ὅταν ὅ ἀδωατή-
 σασα ἐπισπέδαι, μὴ ἰδῇ, καὶ τινι σωτυχία χρησαμένη,
 λήθης τε καὶ κακίας παλιδεῖσα βαρυνθῇ, βαρυνθεῖσα ὅ
 πλεονεύσῃ, καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ γῆν πέσῃ, τότε νόμοι ταύτην μὴ
 φυτῶσαι εἰς μηδεμίαν θήρεον φύσιν, ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ γενέσει·
 ἀλλὰ τῷ μὴν παῖδα ἰδῶν εἰς γονὴν ἀνδρὸς γενησαμένης φι-
 λασόφου, ἢ φιλοκάλε, ἢ μεσικῆ τινὸς καὶ ἐρωτικῆ· τῷ ὅ δ' αὖτε-
 ραν, εἰς βασιλείας ἐννόμῃς ἢ πολεμικῇ καὶ ἀρχικῇ· τεῖτην εἰς
 πολιτικῇ ἢ τινὸς οἰκονομικῇ, ἢ χρηματιστικῇ· τετάρτην, εἰς
 φιλοπόνου γυμναστικῇ, ἢ περὶ σώματι· ἴσιν τινα ἐσομένη;
 πέμπτην μαυρίκον βίον, ἢ τινα τελεσικὸν ἐξέσθ· ἔκτῃ ποιη-
 τικόν· ἐβδομῇ, γεωμετρικόν, ἢ δημιουργικόν· οὐδὲν σοφισ-
 τικόν, ἢ δημοκρατικόν· ἐνάτῃ πυρρηνικόν· ἐν ὅ τούτοις ἀπα-
 σιν ὅς μὴ ἀν δικάως διάγῃ αἰμένον· μοίρας μεταλαμ-
 βάνει· ὅς δ' ἀν ἀδίκως, χεῖρον· εἰς μὴ γὰρ τὸ αὐτὸ ὅθεν
 ἦκε ἡ ψυχὴ ἐκάσῃ, καὶ καδικνέται ἐτῶν μυρίων (καὶ γὰρ πλεον-
 εῖται περὶ τοσούτοις χρόνοις) πολλὴν ἢ τῷ φιλοσοφῶσαν· ἀδύλως,
 ἢ παιδερασθῶσαν· καὶ φιλοσοφίας· αὐτῇ ὅ τεῖτῃ περὶδὲ
 τῇ χιλιετῇ, ἐάν ἐλῶνται τρεῖς ἐφεξῆς τῷ βίον τῶτον, ἔτω
 πλεονεύσῃ, τειχιλιοςὼ ἔτει ἀπερχονται· αἰ ὅ ἀλλαι,
 ὅταν τῷ πρώτῳ βίον τελευτήσωσι, κείσεως ἔτυχον· κειθεῖσαι
 ὅ, αἰ μὴν εἰς τὰ ὑπὸ γῆς δικαιοσύνη ἐλθῶσαι, δίκην ἐκ-
 τείνουσιν· αἰ δ' εἰς τῷ ἔραν τινὰ τόπον ὑπὸ τῷ δίκης κειθεῖ-
 σαι, διάγῃσιν ἀξίως· καὶ ἐν ἀνθρώποις εἶδει ἐβίωσθ· βίῃ· πῶ
 δε χιλιοςὼ ἀμφοτέρω ἀφικνέμεναι ἐπὶ κλήρωσιν τε καὶ αἰρε-
 σιν τῷ δευτέρῃ βίῃ, αἰρῶνται ὅν ἀν ἔδελη ἐκάσῃ· ἐνθα καὶ
 εἰς θνήσκῃ βίῃ ἀνθρωπίνῃ ψυχῇ ἀφικνέται, καὶ ἐκ θνήσκῃ, ὅς
 ποτὲ ἀνθρωπῶν ὡς πάλιν εἰς ἀνθρωπον. Plato in Phaedro,
 Vol. III. p. 248, 249. Ed. Steph. p. 1223. Ed. Francf.

sensual enjoyments, instead of contemplating truth, lose their wings, grow sluggish, and fall down to earth, in order to animate some human body; those who are least depraved, animate the bodies of philosophers, and those most depraved, the bodies of tyrants and oppressors; that after ten thousand years, the worst souls are restored, and recover their wings. Any one may perceive how unworthy these poor and mean fictions are of reason, when the least improved by the help of scripture, yet these dreams, shocking as they are, were the amusement of men of the cleanest heads in the Pagan world. They shew, however, that they were convinced that the present state of men, was a state of corruption, and that it was not so with him in his first state, from which he fell, but they knew not how. It is from scripture alone that we gain the knowledge that God made man upright, and enter'd into a covenant with him, to preserve him in happiness, in case of constant and perpetual obedience, but he, being left to the freedom of his own will, and desiring to be equal to, and independent on his kind and bountiful Creator, broke the law of his God, and, with the loss of all that was good, gain'd the experience of all evil, expos'd himself to death, and procur'd to himself the desert of everlasting

misery. If men are left without this knowledge, they are puzzled and confounded, when they compare themselves with God : If they believe that God is pure and holy, they may be apt to question, whether such impure beings, as they are, have their being immediately from God ; if they are satisfied that they came from God, and yet see in themselves so much ill, they may be ready to suppose, with the gross of the ancient Heathens, that the nature of God is not pure ; in short, the more they enquire, the more they will be lost and bewilder'd in the fruitless search.

III. If men are once convinced that they are in a state of corruption, and obnoxious to the anger of God, the light of nature may make them sensible, that they ought to use all means and methods to be restored to his favour. Accordingly all who had no other religion than that of nature, shew'd, that they would have rejoiced in any way, that might have been sufficient to reconcile them to the supreme being, whose anger they fear'd, and whose favour they desired. Could men think that their worldly substance, or the giving up what is dearest to them, would restore them to happiness, we may imagine them ready enough to sacrifice all : accordingly, in all nations, we find persons have not stuck at endea-

endeavouring to appease God, by thousands of oxen, and ten thousands of rams, they have, as it were, pour'd forth oil and wine in rivers, that, if possible, their transgressions might be carried away. A desire of appeasing God gave rise to some most detestible superstitions; in order to avert his anger, they stuck not to offer their enemies as sacrifices; nay, many have yielded themselves up to the stroke of death, that they might give their flesh for their transgression: They could willingly give a first born, an only child, all the fruit of their bodies, for the sin of their souls; and they could, without sorrow, see their infants burnt alive, in hopes of appeasing an angry superior power. This shews how imperfect reason is in men, that they should think such things might render them pleasing to God, as should make them hateful to all who have any bowels of compassion.

It has been surmised by some, that the Pagans had an obscure notion of God's appearing in the world to restore it, because several nations have represented their supreme God as having a Son, who, under various names, is represented as a deliverer of men. This might take its rise from some remains of tradition; but it does not seem that much can be made of this, for the gods and heroes, the sons of the supreme,

who were called deliverers, were represented to have done their work, in past ages, which was only to kill monsters, and to dethrone tyrants. Here are no evident traces of the way of salvation, by the Son of God. As this is the glory of the scripture scheme, so it is revelation alone which could inform us of it. It is therefore extremely surprizing, that any, who profess themselves Christians, can venture to say, that natural religion will shew how men, being placed in the circumstances they are, full of passion, full of infirmities, and surrounded with variety of temptations of all sorts, may be reconciled to, and accepted by God. This is odd language to come out of the mouths of any who call themselves Christians. Was the case so, it might well be said any divine revelation would be needless; but, alas, it is only insulting common sense to tell us so. It is only revelation can make known to us the way of our recovery from ruin; without this, endless doubts would infest our minds, and terrors would fill our thoughts. We may a little amuse ourselves with the notion of God's being a God of infinite mercy, and benevolence, or, as some take the insolent freedom to

* See the Defence of the Answer to Dr. Waterland,
p. 26.

ſpeak of their Maker, that he is a good-natured Being: but this will yield little comfort to a guilty mind; for as his juſtice is provoked, right reaſon, if we attend to it, will convince us, that muſt be ſatiſfied, in a way worthy of a God of infinite perfection, before goodneſs is extended to us. The juſtice of God is as dear to him as his mercy; and can we think he will injure it, or make it claſh with his mercy, merely to ſave ſuch as have render'd themſelves obnoxious to his diſpleaſure, and unworthy of his favour? Scripture has declared to us, that God has effected the ſalvation of men, by ſending his Son in our nature, that, by the obedience of his life and death, he might atone for our ſins, and procure for us a right and title to the favour of our Judge. In this method, he has cauſed all his perfections to act in harmony; his juſtice is ſatiſfied, by the death of the ſurety of men; his holineſs is ſhew'd in his hating ſin, ſo as not to remit it, without puniſhment; his truth is eſtabliſh'd, in that his threatening is fulfill'd; and, at the ſame time, his mercy, love, and goodneſs, appear in the faireſt colours, in that apoſtate man is reſtored to greater happineſs than was loſt by the fall. Theſe were things unknown to ſuch as enjoy'd no more than the bare light of nature, who could be in

no other than a desponding state, as to pardon of sin, and the favour of God. Their condition must be unhappy, because they were convinced of their need of pardon, but knew not where to apply in order to obtain it.

Some have thought, that the Pagans were not entirely without a notion of a Saviour coming into the world, to instruct mankind about their duty, from a remarkable passage in one of Plato's dialogues: He has ^u introduced Socrates warning one against falling in with the gross absurdities, which some run into in their prayers. To which he added; "It is necessary to wait till some one teaches how to behave our selves towards God, and towards men." On his being thus ask'd, "When will this time come, and who will be this teacher? It will be very delightful to see such an

^u Σ. Ἀναγκάζων ὅτι περιμύθεν ἕως ἂν τις μάθῃ ὡς δεῖ πρὸς Θεὸν κὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους διακείσθαι. Α. Πότε ἔν παύσειαι ὁ χεῖν' ἔτι, ὃ Σώκρατες; κὶ τίς ὁ παιδύσων; ἡδιστα γὰρ ἂν μοι δοκῶ ἰδεῖν τῶτον τ' ἀνθρώπον τίς ἐστίν. Σ. Οὗτός ἐστιν, ὁ μέλει περὶ σὺ· ἀλλὰ δοκῇ μοι—— σὺ δ' ἂν ἀπὸ τ' ψυχῆς πρῶτον ἀφελόντα τ' ἀχλὺν, ἣ νῦν παρῆσα τυγχάνει τοτηνικαῦτ' ἡδη περισφύρειν δι' ὧν μέλλεις γνῶσεσθαι ἡμῶν χακὸν ἡδὲ κὶ ἐσθλόν· νῦν μὲν γὰρ ἐκ ἂν μοι δοκῇς δυνηθῆναι. Α. Αφαιρεῖτο, εἴτε βέλεται, τ' ἀχλὺν, εἴτε ἀλλό τι· ὡς ἐγὼ παρσκευάσμαι, μηδὲν ἂν φεύγειν τῆ' ἀπ' ἐκείνου περιστάττομαι, ὅς τις πόλ' ἐστίν ὁ ἀνθρώπων. Εἴ γε μέλλοιμι βελήϊον γενέσθαι. Σ. Ἀλλὰ μὲν κακῆν' θάυμαστον ὅσῳ περὶ σὺ περιθυμίαν ἔχει. Plato in Alcibiade 2^{do}. cap. 11. p. 255, 256. Ed. Cant. Vol. II. p. 150, 151. Ed. Steph. p. 459. Ed. Francf.

one, whoever he is." He answer'd; " It is he that takes care of you, but the mist ought to be removed from your mind, which now overspreads it, and those means afforded which are necessary for your knowing good and evil, of which you do not now seem capable." To this the reply was; " Let him remove the mist if he pleases, and do any other thing; I am prepared to neglect nothing commanded by him, whoever he is, provided I may grow better : " The rejoinder was, " He takes care of you in a wonderful manner." This has been produced with great pomp, as if it was a decisive proof, that the Heathens, by bare natural light, found out how good men were to be reconciled to God. It is certain that the author of " this passage travel'd into the east ; where, it is very probable, he pick'd up this notion, which he refers to in many other passages of his works, by saying positive determinations of some matters must be left, till

^w That Plato travel'd into Egypt, at least, if not into other parts of the east, is certain : several writers, Pagan as well as Christian, have asserted it ; as Cicero De Fin. Lib. V. c. 19. p. 396. c. 29. p. 429. Ed. Davis. Valerius Max. Lib. VIII. cap. 7. Quintilian. Lib. I. c. 12. p. 124. Ed. Burman. Clemens Alex. Protrept. cap. 6. p. 60. Ed. Oxon. Diogenes Laertius, Vit. Plat. Lib. III. § 6. p. 168. Ed. Westerm. Philostratus Vit. Apollon. Lib. I. c. 2. p. 34. Ed. Lips. Lactantius Instit. Lib. IV. c. 2. p. 350, 351. Ed. Gallaci:

some one comes and instructs us *. The utmost that can be made of this is, the ignorance of mankind was so great, that this man was satisfied of the need there was for some instructor to come into the world, to teach men their duty; but it does not appear, that he had a distinct knowledge of the person who was to do it, or of the method he was to take, in order to accomplish man's happiness. The information men have of the way of salvation by the Son of God, is not what is to be obtain'd from the light of nature; we could never have known that God would be reconciled to us, if he had not so told us; much less could we have thought on the method which one of infinite wisdom would take, in order to accomplish so arduous a work, and to bring about so stupendous a design, if it had not been unfolded to us, in the scriptures of truth.

* Some have thought that Plato drew the description of his just man, (Lib. II. De Republic.) from what is said of the Messiah, in the Psalms and Isaiah; because he has represented him as one who is to be exposed to want, and to live in poverty and disgrace, and as one who, though most strictly good, is to be look'd upon as wicked, and especially from his declaring, that he was to be scourged, tortured, bound, buffeted, and, at last, hang'd, as some render the word, or, in the general, put to the most cruel death, in the following passage: *Οὕτω διακείμενος ὁ δίκαιος μαρτυρώσεται, σκεβλώσεται, ἐκκαυθήσεται τὰ ὀφθαλμῶν τελευτήσῃ, πάντα κατὰ παθεῖν, ἀναγκασθήσεται.* Vid. Plato de Republic. Lib. II. Vol. I. p. 94, 96. Ed. Cantab. Vol. II. p. 361, 362. Ed. Steph. p. 593, 594. Edit. Francf.

IV. The light of nature convinces men of the necessity they are under to perform many social and relative duties, but it never afforded a distinct or consistent scheme of practical religion.

It must be own'd, that a great many excellent things have been said in commendation of virtue, by the Pagans: Some of them, as, in particular, the Stoicks, profess'd themselves the greatest admirers of it, and have afforded us some sublime morality, especially the later Stoicks, Seneca, Epictetus, Arrian, and the emperor Antonine, who lived after Christianity had overspread the world, and who, it is more than probable, borrow'd their best strokes from thence: Yet these ascribed more than was fit to nature, or to the will of man, when they made virtue to lie in his power; and they attributed too much to virtue, when they affirm'd it to be the sole good, and made happiness to lie entirely in it. More than this, they run into most profane rant; they made a virtuous man, on some accounts, superior to God himself. One of the best heads among them, Seneca, has ^y told us, " That

^y Sapiens tam aequo animo omnia apud alios videt, contemnitque, quam Jupiter, & hoc se magis suspicit, quod Jupiter uti illis non potest, sapiens non vult. Seneca Epist. 73.

the wise man looks upon, and contemns the enjoyments with which other men please themselves, with as calm a mind as the supreme God; but regards himself more than God on this account; God cannot make use of them, but the wise man will not." Nay, he has^z ventured to say; "There is one thing in which the wise man exceeds God, because God is wise by the kindness of nature, and not by his own attainment." Nothing can be more extravagant than such bold assertions; they are, indeed, worthy of a sect, who shew'd that they could go as far in nonsense as in blasphemy; when, on other occasions, they affirm'd, that pain was no evil. It is a conceit unworthy of wise men, for any to say, as the Stoicks did in effect, that a man is as happy when his joints are distorted by a rack, as when he is lying on a bed of down; or that he is possess'd of as much temporal blessedness, when he is tormented by the stone or gout, as when he enjoys bodily health, accompanied with ease of mind. This is senseless unnatural stuff, and shews how poorly men judge of virtue and happiness, when they are left to the bare light of nature.

^z Est aliquid quo sapiens antecedit Deum, ille naturae beneficio, non suo sapiens est. Seneca Epist. 53.

It might have been thought, if men would have consulted their own experience, and would have look'd into their own hearts, that they might have been satisfied, that virtue was out of their own power. It must be granted, that some, who studied mankind with exactness, had a right conception as to this, and shew'd they had a larger share of natural light, than the modern advocates for reason. Socrates, in one of his disputations, had shew'd, that virtue came not by nature, or by teaching, and was asked how it was then that men became good: He answer'd, in this remarkable^a manner, " I do not think this can easily be made evident; but I am apt to conjecture it is a divine gift, and that men become good, as men become prophets; these are not so by nature, or art, but by divine inspiration. Good men declare, to those who are members of the same civil society with themselves, things

^a Οἶμαι μὴ ἐκ αὐτῆς φύσεως αὐτὸ δηλωθῆναι, τοπάζω μὴ δὴ θεῶν τι μάστιγα εἶναι τὸ κλῆμα, καὶ γίνεσθαι τὰς ἀγαθὰς ὥσπερ οἱ θεοὶ τῶν μαντείων καὶ χρησμοσολόγοι· εἶτοι γὰρ ἢ τε φύσει τοιοῦτοι γίνονται, ἢ τε τέχνῃ, ἀλλ' ἐπιπνοία ἐκ τῶν θεῶν γιγνώσκοντες τοιοῦτοι εἰσὶν· ἔγωγε καὶ ἄνδρες οἱ ἀγαθοὶ λέγουσι ταῖς πόλεσιν ἐκαστοῖς τὰ ἀποβησόμενα καὶ τὰ μέλλοντα εἶσεσθαι ἐκ θεῶν ἐπιπνοίας πολὺ μᾶλλον καὶ ἐνεργέστερον ἢ οἱ χρησμοσφοί. — Ἐοικεν ἢ τε διδασκτὸν εἶναι ἢ τε φύσει ἀρετῇ, ἀλλὰ θεῶν μοῖρα παραγίγνεσθαι κλημνοῖς. Socrates apud Aeschinem, Dial. I. cap. 13. p. 26, 28. Ed. Horrei. p. 20, 21. Ed. Cler. & Int. op. Platon. Vol. III. p. 379. Ed. Steph. p. 1314. Ed. Franc.

which

which are to be, by divine inspiration, more clearly than such as deliver oracles. It seems to me that virtue is neither taught, nor comes by nature, but is a divine gift to such as possess it." The same conclusion was made, after a long dispute, by Plato^b, in Socrates's name, in the following words: "Virtue is neither by nature, nor by teaching; but it comes by divine distribution, to those who have it, without the help of human search and industry." These sagacious observers of human nature were convinced, that goodness came neither by nature nor by instruction, without a supernatural aid, but they had only some faint glimmerings of light as to this matter; they had no clear conceptions about it, and they only propose it as a matter of conjecture, or, at most, as a problem. There is hardly to be found in the Heathen writers any thing more noble, and more agreeable to truth than this notion; yet some of those who might have improved it, if na-

^b In his dialogue call'd Meno, where the following words are laid down, as the sum of the whole matter, which had been canvass'd.

Ἀρετὴ ἢ τε φύσει, ἢ τε διδακτὴν, ἀλλὰ θεῶν μοίρα παρὰ γιγνούσῃ, ἀνδρῶν, οἷς ἂν παραγίγνεται. Vol. II. p. 99. Ed. Steph. p. 427, 428. Ed. Francf.

The same thing is often inculcated by Plato, in other parts of his works. See likewise the seventeenth dissertation of Maximus Tyrius, which is on this subject. P. 176, &c. Ed. Davif.

tural light had been a good guide, took care to slight it. Hence we have this absurd rant in ^c Cicero: "No one ever reckoned himself indebted to God for virtue, and justly; for we are on good grounds commended for virtue, and glory in it, which could not be, if it was a gift of God, and we had it not from our selves. Who ever gave thanks to the gods on account of his being a good man?" It must be granted, that it thwarts the pride of fallen men to acknowledge themselves indebted to God, for a power to do good; therefore it is no wonder that the generality of them have no notion of this matter.

The temperance, moderation, and contempt of riches, of some Heathens, are things for which they have been immoderately cried up by those who would call themselves Christians; it must be owned, many of the Pagans shewed a less selfish spirit, than some modern dignified infidels, who, like hungry wolves, greedily gape after the

^c Virtutem nemo unquam acceptam Deo retulit, nimirum recte; propter virtutem enim jure laudamur, & in virtute recte gloriamur; quod non contingeret si id donum à Deo, non à nobis haberemus.—Num quis, quod bonus vir esset, gratias Diis egit unquam? Cicero De Nat. Deor. Lib. III. c. 36. p. 335. Ed. Davis. See likewise a foolish harangue of Plutarch against Plato's notion, in the second Volume of his works, absurdly called his *Morals*, p. 439. of the Francfort and Paris Editions.

fatteft benefices in a Christian church, the doctrine of which they deride. Not to take from any their due praise, it must yet be confess'd, that such as were most eminent in some of the before-mentioned virtues, gave way to great vices. Thus as to Socrates and Plato; what the apostle Paul ^d has said of the Heathens in general, held true of them, that God gave such up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves, who changed the truth of God into a lye, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is God blessed for ever." There have apologies been made for the persons mentioned, that they were not guilty of unnatural wickedness, or the love of boys, but had a sort of sublime exalted affection for a beautiful body, which was the seat of a refined mind: But any one who has observed in what an odious lascivious way they always spoke, when they were upon this head, must have less sense than charity, if he can bring himself to believe that nothing of worse than brutish lust was involved in what they talked of, in a rapturous manner, under the name of love. Plato, besides, in his imaginary common-wealth, allowed the community

^d Rom. i. 24, 25.

of wives, though he has express'd himself so ambiguously, that this has been questioned.

There was, on occasion, much of a publick spirit, and a love to their country shewed by many of the Pagans; but this was allay'd by an immoderate degree of pride, vain-glory, and obstinacy. The most admired patriots made themselves their end, in all which they did for their country's service; and their whole aim was to have the empty applause of being heroes after their death. Their sullenness of spirit appeared, in their so often murdering themselves, and the imperfection of their natural light was shewed in their committing the greatest of all sins, under the notion of practising exalted virtue. It is surprizing, that so many foolish encomiums have been made, by such as should know better, on some Heathens, for things which should render them the scorn of all wise men. Thus, for instance, how many times has Cato been set forth, as an instance of greatness of soul, in that he would not out-live the liberty of his country, when the truth is, he had too little a soul, and too envious a temper, to see Cæsar, a person against whom he had a rooted prejudice, have it in his power, as he had it in his nature, to forgive what he had done

against him. Thus likewise Brutus has been cry'd up, as an instance of exalted virtue, only because he, like a vile assassin, murder'd the man with whom he cultivated a seeming friendship, and who had loaded him with favours, and afterwards, meanly and ignominiously, stabb'd himself with the same dagger with which he murder'd his friend, as soon as he found there was a likelihood that some others would make a greater figure in the world than himself. It is easy to call darkness light; but, when the matter is coolly weigh'd, it will be found, that some who have been most cry'd up among the Heathens, acted the part of mad men and desperadoes, rather than of heroes and patriots.

It is the scripture only which gives us a right notion of true morality and exalted virtue. It is from thence only that we are clearly and distinctly inform'd, that it is not sufficient for us to do what is materially good, unless we act out of a principle of love to that God to whom we are indebted for all the blessings we enjoy, unless we make his will our rule, and unless, in all our civil, moral, and religious actions, we aim at the advancement of his glory, in whom we live, move, and have our being. It is in the lively oracles that we are taught, that we must not act from a
selfish

selfish spirit, that we must not make our will and our humour the guide of our actions, and that we must not make vain-glory our end. It is from thence we learn, that we must repent of what we have done amiss, be filled with holy sorrow for our evil actions, watch our hearts as well as our lives, and keep a guard upon our thoughts as well as upon our actions. It is only from the sacred volumes that we are instructed to resign our selves to the will of God, to practise self-denial, to mortify the lusts of the mind, as well as the lusts of the flesh, to be patient under afflictions, not through stoutness or fullness, but out of expectation that all our troubles will turn to our good, and willingly to take up our cross, and follow Christ our Master, through much tribulation. These sublime virtues are not taught in nature's school, and were never practised by any who were left to bare natural light. We have sure instruction as to these heads given us in the scripture, which is the Word of the everliving God; and by that we are informed, that it is not in our power, who are fallen creatures, to render our selves good and virtuous, but that we are enabled, by God, to will and to do according to his good pleasure, and are, by his grace, assisted to choose what is for our

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profit,

profit, and to do what is well pleasing in his sight. It is by supernatural light that we are enabled to conclude, that we are not our own, being called of God, and redeemed by Christ, that we should shew forth the praises of him that calls us to honour, glory, and immortality, and of him who rescues us from wrath and condemnation, by his own blood, that when we have done all, we are unprofitable servants, having done no more than our duty, and that we are indebted for the power to do what we really perform, to the aids of the blessed Spirit, who makes us meet to see and enjoy God, in the happy realms of rest which are above.

V. It is agreeable to the light of nature to allow the immortality of the soul, and a future state of happiness and misery, but such as have had no better light, have ever been uncertain, as to the after-existence of the spirits they carried about with them, and took up with absurd notions about a future world.

Some of the refined Heathens, nay some who might have known better, if they had not, through a conceit of the sufficiency of their reason, scorned Christianity, have owned, that the soul was mortal. Of this herd was the demure Stoick, the emperor
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Marc Antonine, whose senseless jargon is 'as follows: "If souls remain for ever, how has the air contain'd them from eternity? Souls, when they are translated into the air, after continuing there a while, are changed, poured out, and united with, and received into the spermatick principle of things, and so give room for other souls." Some had better apprehensions, as to the soul's noble nature, than this poor bigot; and as they looked on its immortality to be a thing probable, they have said some excellent things on this subject; but yet if their sentiments are nicely examined, it does not appear that they were got entirely above uncertainty, and it will not be found that they were willing to trust to their own arguments. Hence Socrates is made, by Plato, to conclude his defence of himself in this 'mean manner: "Now it is time for me to go hence, to meet my death, and for you to depart, with a prospect of enjoying life, which of us will

^c 'Εἰ διαμύουσιν αἱ ψυχαὶ, πῶς αὐτὰς ἐξ αἰθέρος χωρεῖ ὁ αἴρ—αἱ εἰς τὸ αἶρα μεθιστάμεναι ψυχὰς, ἐπὶ πόσον συμμείνασαι, μεταβάλλεσι, καὶ χέονται, καὶ ἐξάπτονται εἰς τὸ ὅλων σπερματικὸν λόγον ἀπολαμβάνοντα, καὶ τέτον τὸ τρίτον χόρον ταῖς περσυνοικιζομέναις παρῆχουσιν. M. Anton. Lib. IV. c. 21. p. 53, 54. Ed. Oxon.

^f Ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἡδὴ αἶρα ἀπέναι ἐμοὶ μὴ ἀποθανυμένῳ· ὑμῖν δὲ βιωσομένοις· ὅποτεροι δὲ ἡμῶν ἔρχονται ἐπὶ ἀμεινον πράγμα, ἀδύνατον παντὶ πλὴν ἢ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Plato in Apol. Socratis, cap. 23. p. 47. Edit. Cant. Vol. I. p. 42. Ed. Steph. p. 37. Ed. Francf.

have the advantage, is unknown to any one, except it is to God." Indeed, some have ventured ^s to say, that this expression shew'd the great humility of him who utter'd it, but not his doubt about the happiness of good men, in a future state, but surely they imagine we must not use our senses ; for since it is said, none knows whether it will be better with such as go out of the world, than with such as stay behind, it cannot be otherwise than that he who spoke this must be ignorant, which is more than being in doubt about the matter. If the several Pagan writers, who speak about the soul's immortality, are carefully consider'd, it will appear, that as they use poor arguments to prove the probability of this point, so they speak doubtfully about it ; and no wonder, since they were strangers to the gospel, by which life and immortality is brought to light.

The conscience of all men is under an impression, that they must give an account of themselves to God, and must be either happy or miserable, in a future state, according as they are absolv'd, or condemn'd by him. Many of the Heathens were persuaded of the soul's immortality from thinking on its noble nature ; but they did not care to be positive, neither were they

^s Plea for Human Reason, p. 26.

willing entirely to trust their own arguments. As the result of this imperfect assent, to the soul's immortality, almost all nations have entertain'd a notion of a state of happiness and misery after death, but the ideas the Heathens took up with of it, were extremely low. Some thought that the soul pass'd, by way of transmigration, either into the body of another man, if virtuous, or to animate beasts, if otherwise; than which nothing can be more ridiculous: The best account that they gave of a state of misery was, that it was confinement in a dark prison, where guilty men were inclosed with rocks, bound in chains, and lash'd by furies, with whips of serpents; and they represented the state of happiness, as a place where just men enjoy'd rest, in treading pleasant fields, and reposing themselves in fragrant bowers, and they made them to wear away their hours with innocent, though unprofitable, amusements; but they had no conceptions of their being happy in the presence of God, or enjoying communion with him. We may from reason render extremely probable, if not demonstrate, the immortality of the soul; but the light of nature affords us very little help, as to the knowledge of a future state. It is the scripture that informs us, that the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment, where conscience

will always torment them ; and that the righteous shall go into life eternal, where they will not be employ'd in low and mean services, but will be for ever taken up in the delightful work of praising their God, without any sin to disturb them, and without any grief to rack them : There they will enjoy ease and rest, but will not be unactive ; there they will have the delightful society of angels and archangels ; and there they will behold the face of their Redeemer in righteousness, and will have this assurance to add to the pleasure of their state, that their happiness will never cease, and their joys will never end.

THE APPLICATION.

When we, who enjoy the light of revelation, reflect on the imperfect notions, which the most refined among the Pagans had of the most momentous points ; such as the Unity of God, the corruption of man, the way to be reconciled to an offended Creator, the nature of virtue, and a future state, things in which all mankind is equally concerned, we should reckon it a great privilege that we are not left to the dim light of nature, but have a more sure guide afforded us than bare reason, in religious matters. When we look into the writings of the ancient Greeks and Romans,
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we find that they have left us as complete models of history, as beautiful pieces of poetry, and as fine specimens of oratory, as any which have been composed by Moderns, who yet enjoy the advantage of having them to copy after: nay, it may be said^h, that, as to works of genius, the writers of a later date have very seldom equal'd, and never have exceeded the Ancients, only in things composed in a sacred strain, they have vastly out-done them in true sublimity. The reason of remarking this is, that none may go away with a conceit, that the Ancients had less sense and reason than the Moderns. In things which depend merely on intellectual abilities, they shew'd themselves such great masters, that it is justly reputed the greatest perfection, in a piece wrote now, to come any ways up to them. However, these

^h I do not know any modern history that can compare with those wrote by Thucydides, Dionysius, Sallust, and Livy. As to the higher sort of poetry, we have some pieces in the Didascalic kind, wrote by Fracastorius, Vida, Angelius Bargeus, Palearius, D. Heinsius, which exceed much any thing left of the Ancients, except Virgil's Georgics: In the Epic kind, we have nothing comparable to Homer and Virgil, which is without a mixture of the Christian religion; by the help of this, Vida, in his Christias, Mr. Spenser and Mr. Phineas Fletcher, in their allegorical writings, and, above all, Mr. Milton, in his Paradise Lost, have exceeded all the Pagan writers in true sublimity. In the more raised parts of oratory, Demosthenes and Cicero have never been equal'd by any Moderns, except by the Christian preachers, whose plainness has something in it more grand than all their flourishes.

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great masters of reason, these wonderful proficient in polite attainments, run into the most childish absurdities, when they meddled with the important matters of religion, which yet are of universal concern. As this shews how unfit reason, as it is now in men, is to be a guide in sacred matters, so we should take occasion, from hence, to be very thankful, that we enjoy the light of the gospel.

When a celestial herald was sent to proclaim to some shepherds, near Bethlehem, the birth of the Lord of life, he called the message which he was to deliver, glad tidings of great joy, when he thus ⁱ spoke to them; "Fear not, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for to you is born, this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." As the harmless shepherds were tending their fleecy care, they were frightened at the sudden sight of an angel coming in a glorious majestick form; but the messenger of peace took care to inform them, that he came not as an executioner of divine vengeance, that therefore they should not be discouraged, since he was to proclaim in their ears the best news that ever mortals heard, which glad tidings were, that a Saviour was actually

born into the world. These tidings occasioned great joy in the inhabitants of heaven; ^k for “ suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will to men.” The gospel was call’d glad tidings of great joy, eminently, as it made known the actual birth of the Saviour of the world to the shepherds; and, indeed, the divine revelation, in the gospel, of the whole method of man’s salvation, makes it a message of joy and peace, to all who have a value for their own interest. It is from the scriptures of truth that we are informed, that the divine Persons consulted about our welfare, and laid the plan of our happiness before the heavens were stretch’d over the empty place, and the earth was hung upon nothing. God the Father chose to salvation a number of the posterity of man, and enter’d into a covenant with God the Son, as the Head of the elect, and with all the elect in him, as his seed. The oracles of truth declare to us, that, according to the covenant of grace, the Son of God appear’d as the Saviour of man, who had destroy’d himself, and, that he might accomplish the great work he had undertook, assumed

^k Luke v. 13, 14.

the human nature into union with his divine Person, lived a life of ignominy and disgrace, and died a shameful and a painful death on the cross: They assure us, in the most positive manner, that he who was born a child, who appear'd as a mean man, and who died as a malefactor, was no less than the mighty God, one invested with infinite power; who consequently was able to bear the divine wrath, to offer up to infinite justice a proper satisfaction, and to make way for mercy to be glorified, without any other divine perfection being injured: The gospel reveals the perfect righteousness of this great Saviour, as the righteousness which, being imputed to the guilty, can justify them before God, or give them a right to forgiveness of sins, to the favour of the supreme Potentate, whom they have provoked, and to everlasting happiness: It is in this that the Holy Spirit is promised, to quicken, renew, and sanctify those for whom Christ died; to enable them to follow holiness, or to practise virtue, out of love to God, and with an aim to advance his glory; to strengthen them, and support them, that they may grow in grace, and persevere in true godliness; to comfort them by working in them peace, joy, and hope; and to bring them, at last, to the land of uprightness: In fine, it is the scripture which declares

clares to us, that the departing spirits of such as trust in Christ, are convey'd into the presence of God, to partake of the most substantial joys, and that their bodies shall be raised in glory, when Christ, who is their life, and the God of their salvation, shall appear. These glorious things we, who have the scriptures, know from thence, and seeing, through the tender mercies of our God, this gospel light has visited us, we ought to abound in thankfulness, and should rightly improve the knowledge with which we are bless'd. And as we should be sensible of our own mercies, so we should greatly pity such muddy souls, as are enamour'd with the darkness of Paganism, and choose obscurity rather than light, because their pride is great, their apprehensions are condensed, and their deeds are evil.

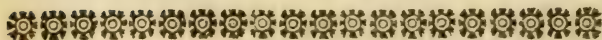
When we receive the scripture account of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, concerning themselves in our salvation, we may with rapture cry out, "O the depth of the love of these divine Persons, which, in the full extent of it, passes knowledge." But can we be enough affected with a sense of it? Alas! no; not as long as we sojourn in these curtains of distance: We cannot sing their praises in so exalted and so rapturous a strain, as we ought; how do Hosannahs languish on
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our tongues? And how does our devotion die? This will be our case, as long as we have abode in a country of separation, and are strangers in a strange land. We cannot then but be wishing that the hour may come, and the day may hasten, when we shall put off the rags of our mortality, and be cloathed with the white attire of innocence, and shall take up our abode in the amiable tabernacles, which are spread on the mountains of spices. There, there, and no where else, in the company of angels and archangels, and of all who have wash'd their robes in the blood of the Lamb, and have trod the path to glory before us, we shall strike the strings of the heavenly lyres with skilful hands, and shall raise our voices to a due pitch, to sound forth, to all eternity, the high praises of the Father, who chose us to salvation; of the Son, who redeemed us from wrath; and of the Spirit, who made us meet for, and conducted us to the peaceful provinces of joy and rest.

To the three divine Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the one living and true God, whom we adore, be supreme honour and glory, now, henceforth, and for evermore. Amen.



THE
DOCTRINE
OF
PARTICULAR ELECTION
STATED AND DEFENDED:
IN TWO
SERMONS:
BY *JOHN SLADEN*,
Minister of the Gospel.





S E R M O N I.



2 T H E S S. ii. 13.

*We are bound to give thanks
always to God for you, bre-
thren, beloved of the Lord,
because God hath, from the
beginning, chose you to salva-
tion, through sanctification of
the Spirit, and belief of the
truth.*



S pride was the great sin, and proved the sad fall of our first parents, so it is the prevailing vice and damning evil of their posterity: They, in affecting to be as God, knowing good and evil, ruin'd themselves; and we, in following their pernicious example,
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bring swift destruction upon our selves; “ Vain man would be wise, though he is born as the wild asses colt,” a poor unthinking ignorant creature. We either aspire after the knowledge of what God has not revealed, and pretend to dive into the secrets of his counsel, or we reject and quarrel at what he has declared, because it sets us low, and advances the riches of divine grace and wisdom, and ascribes all glory to God, and will not allow us to boast of any thing of our own. From hence it is, that men speak evil of the things they know not, and swell into an opposition to those truths that they cannot fathom, and which tend to lower their exalted pride. What was said of the man of sin, in particular, is too justly applicable to all men by nature: “ He opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sits in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God ^a.”

The grand controversy, between corrupt nature, and the almighty God, is not whether any or all of the human race shall be saved; but who shall have the glory of salvation ascribed to him, God or the creature. The pride of man prompts him to say, the glory of salvation is due to me,

for I save my self; but the great Jehovah justly challenges the glory of salvation to himself, and says, I will have all the glory thereof, for it is by my sovereign and efficacious grace that men are saved. Thus pride is the unhappy parent of unbelief, and a principal cause of the enmity there is in the carnal mind against God; yea, this is at the bottom of all the rude opposition made to those doctrines of scripture, which illustrate and advance the almighty power and free grace of God in the salvation of sinners.

Whence is it that the doctrines of special election, of efficacious grace in regeneration and conversion, of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, and of the infallible perseverance of the saints, though so clearly revealed, and strongly proved in the Word of God; are, notwithstanding, so generally denied, opposed, and ridiculed? but because they give all the glory of salvation to God, and will not allow man so much as to boast a little. This I apprehend to be the main reason of the furious assaults that, in all ages, have been made against these glorious truths; but “let God be true, and every man a liar^b,” “To God belongeth mercy, but to us shame and confusion of face^c.”

^b Rom. iii. 4.

^c Dan. ix. 7, 8, 9.

“ O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out ! Who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor ? Or who has first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again ? for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things : To whom be glory for ever, Amen ^d.”

The words of our text give us an account of the ground of the difference between the believing Thessalonians, and those reprobates that the apostle is speaking of, in the context : “ They, says he, shall be damned, but you shall be saved ; they believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness ; you have believed, and are sanctified ; they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, you have been effectually called, through the gospel, to the obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” A wide and awful difference ! But whence arises this discrimination ? What is the cause and reason of it ? How comes it about that these Thessalonians shall be saved, and the others shall not be saved ? That these receive the truth in the love of it, and the others do not thus receive it ? The apostle tells us, that it is

^d Rom. xi. 33, 34, 35, 36.

the distinguishing grace of God in election; they had the gospel preached to them, as well as these Thessalonians, but they refused it, and chose darkness rather than this light; these received it with pleasure, and walked with comfort in the light of it; and the reason is, because God had, from the beginning, chose them to salvation; “We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God has, from the beginning, chose you to salvation, thro’ sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth”

Some^c, by the word Beginning here, understand beginning of the apostles preaching the gospel to these Thessalonians, and would have the words to be read thus, Because God has, from the beginning (of our preaching to you, shewed that he had) chose you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, which gives the earnest of it, and makes us meet for it, and belief of the truth, which promises it. I am glad to find such a paraphrase as this upon the text, given by one who was a known opposer of our doctrine; for though his sense of the words, “From the beginning,” is certainly wrong, as I may shew hereafter; yet the exposition in general is so

^c Whitby.

far from being repugnant to the doctrine of particular election, that it abundantly confirms it.

Another ^f commentator gives this as his sense of the text ; We are bound to give thanks to God alway for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because he has, from the beginning, chose you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth ; that is, says he, “ because he has been so favourable to you above others, as to appoint the gospel to be preached to you, and you to be called to the faith of Christ so early, and to be taken out of that wicked generation by the preaching of the gospel, and that grace which is annexed to it, and by your receiving the truth.” But this interpretation of the words is so very low and jejune in it self, and so contrary to the plain meaning of the text, that the common reader may easily discern the weakness and falseness of it ; I shall therefore give what I apprehend to be a just paraphrase upon the words : “ We are bound to give thanks to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God has, from the beginning, or from eternity, chose you to salvation, even eternal life, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, as

^f Hammond,

the necessary means, whereby you are to enjoy this salvation."

In the words we may observe these several parts.

1. The affectionate compellation; "Brethren, beloved of the Lord." Brethren, a title denoting nearness of relation, and carrying in it strong affection. Beloved, not only of us apostles, but of the Lord. Blessed are they who are beloved of the Lord; therefore persons are drawn to God in time, because he loved them from everlasting^s; we love him, because he first loved us^h; he redeemed and pardons us, because he loved usⁱ.

2. We have the apostle's acknowledgment of praise due to God on the account of these Thessalonians; "We are bound, or we ought, to give thanks always to God for you." We do give thanks, and we look upon our selves as obliged to do so. We give thanks to God on your behalf, and that not occasionally, or for a time only, but incessantly, always. This shews the high opinion the apostle had of the blessing bestowed on these persons, and was a testimony of the great respect he had for them.

3. We have the ground and cause of the apostle's acknowledgment of praise due

^s Jer. xxxi. 3.

^h 1 John iv. 19.

ⁱ Rev. i. 5.

to God for these Thessalonians; and that is, their election of God, "because God hath chose you to salvation." This is an evidence that they were beloved of the Lord, and this is the foundation of praise to God for them.

Here we may observe: The act, chosen, "hath chosen," or elected. It is such a choice as discriminates them from others, and it is a choice that will secure the end. The Agent, God; "God hath chose." God who made you, God whom you had rejected and affronted, God who has power and authority to choose whom he pleases, he hath chosen; and the object or persons chosen, you Thessalonians, once unbelieving and unholy, but now faithful and sanctified. God has chose you, who might justly have rejected you; he has chose you, when he refused others; he chose you before you chose him. This appears,

4. From the antiquity of the choice, "from the beginning;" not from the beginning of your effectual calling, nor of our preaching to you, nor of the gospel, nor of time, but from eternity; for tho' the phrase, from the beginning, seems to have respect to time, yet by it eternity is generally to be understood, in the sacred writings; as where God is called the "ancient of days," to signify his eternity;

nity^k; and where wisdom, speaking in the person of Christ, says, “ I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was^l:” And that this must be the sense of the words, in our text, is evident, from that place where God is said to choose us in Christ, “ before the foundation of the world^m.”

5. We have the end of the choice, or the blessing that they were chosen to, even salvation: Not to external privileges, not to the enjoyment of the gospel, not to the means of salvation only, but to salvation it self; complete and final salvation, even to eternal life. This was what God had chosen them to; and this was to be the consequence of their faith and sanctification. That this must be the meaning of salvation here, is indisputable; not only from the following words in the text, which tell us, that they were chose to salvation, “ thro’ sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth,” but also from the subsequent verse; “ Whereunto he called you, by our gospel, to the obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ;” i. e. to which sanctification and faith he called you, by the preaching of our gospel to you, that you might by these obtain the glory of Christ, which is your salvation. Here is

^k Dan. vii. 9.

^l Prov. viii. 23.

^m Eph. i. 4.

salvation mentioned, not only distinct from sanctification and faith, but from the gospel, the means of salvation ; and therefore by it must be meant eternal salvation, consisting in our obtaining the glory of Christ, or “ beholding his glory ⁿ.”

6. We have the means in the use of which they were to enjoy the salvation, to which they were chose to ; and they are sanctification and faith : “ He hath chose you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.” God did not choose them to salvation, without holiness and faith ; he did not, by one decree, choose them to salvation, and, by an after-act, determine the means ; he did not choose them to salvation, because they were holy and faithful ; he did not choose them to a possible or probable salvation, that is, provided they performed the conditions of salvation, and did believe and were holy, which he left entirely to their own choice ; but he chose them, by one determinate decree, to a certain salvation, which they should infallibly obtain, thro’ faith and sanctification ; and these two, even sanctification and faith, the apostle here joins together, to let us see that they are inseparable, and to assure us, that they shall both be found in all those whom God will save.

From the words thus divided and explained, we may observe,

(1.) That there are a certain number of fallen Adam's race, whom God has chose to salvation. The Theſſalonians in the text were, as elect, plainly distinguished from those of whom the apostle had been speaking, in the foregoing context; not as chosen to the external means of salvation, for, in this sense, the others were chose as well as them, but as chose to eternal life. Election cannot properly be universal; the very nature of the act supposes a refusal of some. There being some elect, certainly infers some non-elect: "There is a remnant, says the apostle °, according to the election of grace;" and a remnant can never be all.

(2.) When God chooses persons to an end, he also determines the means to that end. The same decree, that designs any persons to salvation, ascertains the means for the obtaining of that salvation: And these are declared to be faith and holiness; for "he who believes not, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him ^p;" "and without holiness no man shall see the Lord ^q." God has chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. God

° Rom. xi. 5.

^p John iii. 36.

^q Heb. xii. 14.

has chose you to salvation, and therefore he has sanctified your spirits, or rather has given you his Spirit, to sanctify you, and make you to believe the truth of his gospel. Faith and holiness are not the causes of election, but are the necessary means by which the elect enjoy that salvation, to which God chooses them, and may properly be said to be a part of the salvation decreed, if there is any justice in the distinction of salvation into initial and final.

If faith and holiness were the causes of election, then it would not be of grace, according to the apostle Paul's way of reasoning ; " If by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace ; but if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work, but the election is of grace [†]." If faith and holiness were the causes of election, God could not be said to choose us that we might be holy ; for holiness cannot in the same respect be both cause and end : We cannot be chose to it and for it both, but God chose men that they might be holy [‡]." If faith and holiness were the causes of election, then God could not be said to choose us first, but we rather to choose him first ; whereas our Saviour tells his disciples, " Ye have not chose me, but I

[‡] Rom. xi. 5, 6.

[†] Ephes. i. 4.

have chose you, and ordain'd you, that you should go and bring forth fruit ^t." If faith and holiness were the causes of election, then there would be no room for that objection of the non-elect; "Why does he yet find fault? for who has resisted his will ^u? Nor would the answer the apostle gives to the objection be pertinent; "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing form'd say to him that form'd it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured, with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory, on the vessels of mercy, which he hath before prepared to glory? Even us whom he has called not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles ^w:" "So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shews mercy ^x."

(3.) Election is an eternal purpose of God to save. The Socinians and Remonstrants assert it to be only a temporal act, and so confound election with effectual

^t John xv. 16.
20, 21, 22, 23, 24.

^u Rom. ix. 19.
^x Chap. ix. 16.

^w Chap. ix.

calling; whereas the scriptures speak of them as distinct things, asserting our vocation to be a temporary act, and our election to be an eternal purpose of God: Thus when our Saviour says, "Many are called, but few are chosen^y;" and when the apostle Paul says, "Whom he predestinated, them he also called," and speaks of persons as "called according to the purpose of God^z;" here is a plain distinction between being called, and being chosen and predestinated: So when the apostle, in the text and context, talks of being "chosen in the beginning to salvation, and of being called by the gospel;" and, in another place, of God's "purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began^a;" he plainly declares to us, that, though our vocation is temporary, our election is an eternal act of God. This is demonstrable from the pre-ordination of Christ to be a sacrifice; "Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for believers^b;" and who was "a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world^c." I might add to these that text, where Christ's people are said to "inherit a kingdom prepared for

^y Matt. xx. 16.

^z Rom. viii. 30, 28.

^a 2 Tim. i. 9.

^b 1 Pet. i. 20.

^c Rev. xiii. 8.

them,

them, from the foundation of the world ^d.”

All which scriptures do abundantly prove to us, that election is an eternal purpose of God to save, and so to be distinguished from our actual salvation, both in whole, and in part.

(4.) To be chose of God to salvation, is matter of great thankfulness. This is a greater blessing than to be chose as Israel of old was to Canaan, a land-flowing with milk and honey; or as David, to be chose a king; or as Jeremiah, to be a prophet; or as John, to be a fore-runner of Christ; or as Paul, to be an apostle of Christ. It is a greater blessing than to be chose universal monarch of the world: This is the very fountain and foundation of all blessedness.

Before I enter upon what I particularly design, from these words of the text, I would beg leave to lay down a few premises, which may serve to direct us in judging of and censuring the doctrine of election. As,

1. The doctrine of an election is so fully and clearly revealed in the word of God, that Christians of all persuasions profess to believe it, though they differ widely in their sentiments about the nature and extent of it; wherefore the doctrine ought

^d Matt. xxv. 34:

not to be condemned in the gross, and it betrays great weakness and egregious folly to take offence at the very word.

2. There is no doctrine, though never so plainly laid down in the sacred scriptures, but what subtil and selfish men have form'd some objections against.

3. We ought not to deny or be stagger'd in our minds about a doctrine we have received, because of some objections raised against it, which, it may be, we cannot, at present, answer; for, if so, there is no doctrine but what we should be tempted to deny, at one time or other.

4. In order to a settled belief of any controverted doctrine of faith, we ought carefully to weigh and consider the several arguments and objections for and against it, and to be determined on that side of the question where the chief strength lies.

5. In our enquiries after reveal'd truths, we should have an immediate dependance on the divine Spirit, to enlighten our minds, and to lead us into the knowledge of saving doctrines; otherwise we can never be sincere enquirers after truth.

6. Persons should not censure a doctrine as damnable, unless they are able to prove that it is false, and then the belief of it is hazardous to salvation. This I particularly mention, because many persons have been very lavish in throwing the black epithets

thets of unmerciful, destructive, and damnable, upon this doctrine of special determinate election.

Having laid down these rules, by way of premise, I proceed now to the main thing I intend, from the words of our text, and that is, according to the province assign'd me, in this Lecture, to open and vindicate the great and important doctrine of special election. And the method which I propose, through divine assistance, to pursue in this affair, will be this :

- I. I shall state the case in hand, and explain what I take to be meant by this doctrine.
- II. I shall produce positive proof to confirm it.
- III. I shall consider the arguments and objections brought against it. And I shall make some application.

It cannot be expected that I should discuss this doctrine in all its parts and properties, in the narrow compass to which I am confined : I shall therefore chiefly apply my self to what I take to be the main controversy of the present day, as to the article of election ; and that is, whether there is such a thing as a personal absolute election to salvation, in contradistinction to a general national election to church

privileges, or to the means of salvation, and to a conditional indeterminate election to salvation.

I. I am to explain the doctrine. And here I would give the various senses of the word Election, especially in the book of God; and then lay down the different opinions of persons about the doctrine.

I. As to the different acceptations of the word. Sometimes it has respect to excellency; and thus it is refer'd both to persons and things; to persons, such as have any uncommon or peculiar excellence, are said to be chose, or choice persons; and that whether it refers to superior stature, and external appearance, as in the case of Saul, who was called a choice young man, because, from his shoulders and upwards, he was higher than any of the people^e; or to any excellency of art, as the seven hundred left-handed men are called chosen men, because every one could sling stones to an hair's breadth, and not miss^f; or to uncommon courage and might, as where it is said^g, Abijah set the battle in array, with an army of valiant men of war, even four hundred thousand chosen men: Jeroboam also set the battle in array against him, with eight hundred

^e 1 Sam. ix. 2.

^f Judges xx. 16.

^g 2 Chron. xiii. 3.

thousand chosen men, being mighty men of valour. Thus the word is applied to persons; we find it also applied to things that are excellent: Thus we read of "chosen chariots^h," and "of choice sheepⁱ." Whatever is excellent, is said to be elect or chose, in the style of the Hebrews, because when persons choose, they generally pick out the best, and most valuable from among the rest. Sometimes the word Election signifies a choosing to a particular office and employ, whether civil or sacred: Thus Saul is said to be "chosen^k" to be a king; and Judas is said to be "chosen^l" to the apostleship. Sometimes it signifies a choosing to external privileges, and this not of private and single persons, but of whole bodies and communities. Thus the people of Israel are said to be an "elect and chosen people," in many places of the Old Testament, because God had distinguished them from all other nations, by conferring peculiar blessings upon them. Sometimes it may refer to those who, under the gospel, have been proselyted to the Christian faith, and enjoy the means of salvation; whence the converted Jews are said to be a "chosen generation^m;" but more usually by this term is

^h Exod. xiv. 7.
^l John vi. 70.

ⁱ Neh. v. 18.
^m 1 Pet. ii. 9.

^k 1 Sam. x. 24.

meant an election to eternal life and salvation. And here sometimes we find the word spoke objectively, for the persons chose “the election hath obtainedⁿ ;” i. e. the elect, or persons elected. Sometimes it is taken formally for the act of God in choosing, which is called the “election of grace^o ;” and the “purpose of God according to election^p .

2. I proceed now to state the different opinions of persons, as to the doctrine of election.

(1.) Some by election understand no more than a general national election, an election to the external means of salvation. As the Jews were said to be an elect people, because they had the statutes and ordinances of God ; and England may be called an elect nation, as being favoured with the enjoyment of the gospel, while other nations have not the means of grace. But, though we allow that there is an election, thus general and external, yet this cannot be all that is meant by election, because we often meet with a particular and personal election, and an election to ~~salva-~~tion, in the sacred scriptures.

(2.) Some, by election, suppose no more to be intended, than a conditional decree, or purpose of God, to save all that believe

ⁿ Rom. xi. 7.

^o Chap. xi. 5.

^p Chap. ix. 11.

in Christ, repent of their sins, and yield sincere obedience to him. But we ought to distinguish between a promise and a purpose, a declaration and a determination. God does, indeed, by his revealed will, declare, that all who believe and repent, shall be saved ; but we are no where told that he has decreed to save men upon these precarious conditions. God cannot properly be said to decree men to salvation, provided they believe and repent, or to decree to save those who believe and repent. Because,

[1.] Faith and repentance are not the conditions of God's decreeing salvation to any, but the qualifications of the persons, whom God has absolutely decreed to save. God has not decreed to save men upon the conditions of faith and repentance, but he has determined to give faith and repentance to all whom he has decreed to save ; and accordingly he has declared these to be necessary qualifications in all saved ones.

[2.] If God decreed men to salvation upon these conditions, election would not be of grace ; for if any work performed, or to be performed by us, is the cause of God's choosing us, God cannot be said to choose us freely ; nor can it be an act of grace, according to the apostle Paul's

way of arguing^a, which we observed before.

[3.] Election, according to the scripture notion of it, is effectual to salvation. God will give faith and eternal life to all his chosen; wherefore it cannot be a mere conditional decree, to save those that believe and repent, without securing the faith and repentance of any: But more of this hereafter.

[4.] If God was to decree salvation to men upon the uncertain conditions of faith and repentance, the will of God must, in a most important affair, depend on the will of man; nor could God absolutely determine the salvation of any one soul, till he was to see how the will of man would turn; nay, not till his perseverance to the end, and that will not be till death.

[5.] According to this notion, no one may be saved; for if God has only determined to save those who believe and repent, and not decreed to give faith and repentance to any, it may so happen, that not one person shall eventually be saved, notwithstanding this decree of God; for, if it is left to every man's free will, to believe and repent, whatever boasts we may make of its power, we have from hence

^a Rom. xi. 5, 6.

no positive assurance that any one shall believe and repent.

(3.) Some, by election, understand no more than a temporary separation, calling, and conversion; but this is the effect of election, and not election it self. We are called "according to God's purpose, and whom he predestinated, them he also called". Now predestination and the purpose of God must be very different from calling, which proceeds from it, unless the cause and the effect are the same thing. Election is frequently spoke of as an act of God, in eternity, and therefore it cannot be a mere temporary act: The evidence of our election is in time, the decree it self is from eternity.

(4.) Some, by election, understand the eternal purpose of God to save certain and particular persons. Now, under this general notion of it, we shall find the sentiments of men to be very different: Some tell us, that it is for faith and good works foreseen; but if we are chose to faith and good works, we cannot be chose for them. God does not foresee that men will believe and be holy, and from hence choose them to salvation; but he foresees that men will believe and be holy, because he has chose them to salvation, through faith

[Rom. viii. 28, 30;

and holiness. God cannot be said to foresee that any will believe and be holy, to whom he has not determined to give these saving principles; and he has determined to give them only to those whom he has chose to salvation. Some assert, that God, in electing certain persons to salvation, had no regard to the fall; that election respects men only as creatures of his making, and not as creatures that had fallen from him; but though the sovereignty of God may herein seem to have a wonderful display, yet I cannot think that his other divine perfections are glorified by this opinion. Some allow of a particular election, but deny any such thing as a non-election or preterition; they grant, that a certain number shall infallibly be saved, but, at the same time, affirm, that all may be saved if they will. This is an opinion that is absurd in its very nature, as well as it is evidently contrary to the word of God. Some tell us, that they believe both an election and a reprobation; but farther suppose, that there is a middle sort of persons, who are neither elect nor reprobate, and who may yet be saved: But this is a notion of which we have no footsteps in the Word of God, and which is altogether indefensible.

Thus have I given you the various sentiments of persons about the doctrine of election;

election; if I may be permitted now to give my sense of it, it is this: It is the eternal and immutable purpose and design of God to save a determinate number of fall'n Adam's children, by Jesus Christ. It is not a national election, or an election to church privileges only: It is not a determination to save those who believe, and which leaves it uncertain whether any will believe. It is not a temporary call of men to salvation; but, as I have observed, an everlasting and invariable purpose and design of God, to save certain particular persons of Adam's fall'n race. God fore-saw, in his eternal fore-knowledge, the whole posterity of Adam lost and undone, and he determines, in his sovereign goodwill, to raise to his mercy a trophy of honour, by erecting to himself a glorious church, out of the rubbish of this apostacy; and that his purpose, according to election, might stand, without any injury offered to his other perfections, he enter'd into a covenant with Christ, as the second Adam, and Head of this chosen people, according to which covenant Jesus Christ was to fulfil the law, suffer, and die, in the room and stead of this chosen people, and thereby purchase for them, and secure to them faith, sanctification, and eternal life; so that all the elect of God shall infallibly be saved. When God chose a people

ple to salvation, he laid his scheme in such infinite wisdom, that not one of his chosen people should miss of the end.

II. I am now to prove, that there is such an election, or that God has immutably design'd the salvation of a certain number of fallen Adam's children. This is a doctrine that is too generally denied and exploded, in the present day. Persons make a jest of particular personal election, and, in the room of it, set up a general national one: But whatever insults and contempt are thrown upon this truth, I hope, by divine assistance, to make it appear, that it is an article founded on the sacred scriptures, and a doctrine according to godliness.

I. We may argue the truth of the doctrine from the divine perfections. Whatever doctrines are deduced from scripture, and are agreeable to the divine perfections, must be true; and that this is so, I will endeavour to prove, by the following method of reasoning.

(I.) It must be granted, that there is one ever living and true God, who is possess'd of all possible perfection. To deny that there is a God, is to break in upon the first principle of reason; to suppose an imperfect God, is a contradiction to common sense, and contrary to all the ideas we have of Deity, both from natural and
 reveal'd

reveal'd religion. If there is a God, he must be a being of absolute perfection.

(2.) It must be allowed, that whatever perfection or excellency is to be found in any creature, the same must be essential to the most high God, and that in the most eminent and transcendent degree. If every creature derives its being from God, as its first cause, then no creature can possibly be possessed of any excellency, but what must, in the highest and most absolute sense, belong to God. Since therefore God made all things, he must be before and above all things; before them in existence, and above them in perfection: "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?"

(3.) No one can deny that it is an excellency in any creature to be wise and powerful; wise to lay a scheme of what he intends to do, and powerful to perform and accomplish what he designs. For a rational being to set about a work, without first forming a model in his mind of what he intends to pursue, is to discover a defect of wisdom, and not to be able to accomplish the plan he hath laid down, bewrays a want of power.

[Psal. xciv. 9, 10.

These premises being granted, which cannot, I apprehend, be reasonably denied, it must follow, from hence, that whatever the great God does, as the effect of power, he design'd to do it ; and whatever he design'd to do, he does. These are propositions self-evident, which ought not to be disputed ; for to suppose God to perform any work which he did not first design to perform, is to charge him with a degree of folly, and with acting below an intelligent agent ; to suppose him to design to do a thing, which he does not effect, is to tax him with impotence. If it is an instance of the wisdom and power of man, first to design a work, and then to perfect it, the great God, who is infinite in both these perfections, must design what he effects, and effect what he has designed.

Either God actually saves all men, or he does not ; if he does, he must have designed it ; if he does not, it is plain he never designed it. To assert that God designed to save all men, and yet that, in fact, he only saves some, is, in effect, to affirm, either that he changes his purpose, as to a great many, or that he wants power to execute his intentions towards them ; the very supposition of either of which is false and blasphemous : For reason must tell us, that it is impossible, for an infinitely wise
 God,

God, to change his mind, or to alter his purpose ; and that it is equally impossible, that a being of almighty power should not be able to bring his purposes to effect. To this decision of reason, the sacred scriptures bear their testimony, in the plainest and strongest assertions ; when it is said, that “ God is not a man that he should lye ; neither the son of man, that he should repent : Has he said, and shall he not do it ? or has he spoke, and shall he not make it good ? ” God may seem to repent, or to do those things in his providence, which would argue repentance in man ; but whatever contrariety there may be in his providences, there can be no alteration in his purposes ; therefore Job, under the different dispensations of God towards him, readily acknowledged this of him ; “ He is of one mind, and who can turn him ? and what his soul desires, even that he does ; for he performs the thing that is appointed for me . ” With how much majesty does the great Jehovah deliver himself in these words ; “ I am God, and there is none else ; I am God and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure . ”

[†] Numb. xxiii. 19. [‡] Job xxiii. 13, 14. [§] Isa. xlii. 9, 10.

To this the church bears witness, when she says, "Our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he pleased ^x."

So Solomon tells us, that there "are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord that shall stand ^y" God works without controul or resistance; he does "according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say to him, what dost thou ^z?"

"In whom also (says the apostle, speaking of himself, and the believing Ephesians) we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him, who works all things after the counsel of his own will ^a. Thus our doctrine stands firm upon the infinite wisdom and almighty power of God. All that God design'd to save, he saves; but he actually saves some only, therefore he design'd only to save some of fallen Adam's children; for, if we consider God as infinite in wisdom, and of almighty power, there cannot be a more rational way of arguing than from his acts to his designs.

I might further argue the doctrine from the foreknowledge of God. God foreknows from eternity whatsoever shall come

^x Psal. cxv. 3.

^y Prov. xix. 21.

^z Dan. iv. 35.

^a Eph. i. 11.

to pass in time, and particularly he foreknows all that will be saved. Now either all men will be saved, or not ; if they will not, in fact, all be saved, then God does not foreknow that all will be saved, but he only foreknows the salvation of those who shall eventually be saved ; and therefore he foreknows their salvation, because he design'd to save them. If God did, from eternity, foreknow that only some of the fallen race of Adam would be saved, then he, from eternity, designed to save some of them only : But God did, from eternity, foreknow that some only would be saved, because, in fact, all will not be saved.

Nor can this be any impeachment of the justice or mercy of God, because he had been just had he determined to destroy all Adam's sinful offspring ; and it is the effect of infinite mercy if he saves any of them. Should it be said, that God design'd the salvation of all men upon certain conditions ; to this it may be reply'd, either God did design that these conditions should be performed by all, or he did not ; if he did, then all would be saved ; and that all will be saved, those who oppose our doctrine do not pretend to affirm ; if he did not, then it must carry in it a high reflection on the wisdom of God, to suppose him to design an end, upon precarious conditions, or to decree the salvation of
all

all men, upon the performance of conditions, which he must foreknow many of them would not perform, because it is evident, in fact, that many do not perform them.

To conclude this head of argument : If it cannot be proved that all men will actually be saved, it is weak in us, and it supposes a manifest defect in God, to affirm that he design'd the salvation of all men upon certain conditions ; and especially it is the more so, because, notwithstanding this universal conditional decree, it is uncertain whether any one will be saved ; for by the same reason that we cannot affirm the actual salvation of all men, from this decree, we cannot ascertain the certain salvation of one man. That decree which makes the salvation of all men only possible, does not assure the salvation of one man, but renders the salvation of each individual person a bare possibility.

2. I come now to examine what proof we have of this doctrine in the Word of God.

I shall not attempt to produce any arguments which might be collected from the sacred writings, by comparing several scriptures together, but shall vindicate those particular texts which I apprehend to confirm the doctrine under consideration ;
and

and these, for the sake of variety and method, I shall digest into this order. I shall, first, produce those that prove a personal election, in contradistinction from a national one; then I shall offer such as assert an election to salvation, in opposition to those who affirm that election refers only to the means of salvation, or to church privileges; and afterwards I shall mention those that assure the certain salvation of a chosen people, to refute the notion of an universal conditional election.

(1.) I would produce some of those scriptures that prove a personal election, in contradistinction to a national one. That the election mentioned in the holy scriptures has a frequent respect to general bodies, or communities, I will readily allow; but to affirm that it is only of such, is a bold and groundless assertion. It is very evident, that our Saviour speaks of a particular, and not general; a personal, and not national election; when he says, "Many are called, but few are chosen ^b." This, say some, is only a proverbial speech; but if it was, the proverb must carry some meaning in it: These words, says one ^c, refer to the Jews, of whom, though many were called by Christ and his apostles to

^b Matt. xxii. 14.
of Election.

^c Dr. Whitby, in his Discourse

faith in him, yet few of them did or would accept of him as their Saviour, or embrace the faith of Christ; but though these words have a prime reference to the Jews, yet it will not follow that the doctrine contain'd in them is not of more large and general extent, and may refer to those who, in all after-ages, are under the gospel call. Admitting that by the chosen is meant those who believe, which, however, is against the grammatical sense of the words, it is a strong proof of their election, their faith being the evidence thereof. Faith is of the elect of God, and therefore few believe, because few are elected, according to that of our Saviour; "You believe not, because you are not of my sheep^d." The sense of the place I take to be this; Many are called, but few are chosen, i. e. many are called, externally by the gospel, to outward privileges, but few are eternally chose to salvation, or appear to be chose to salvation, because few believe in Christ: But, let the meaning of the place be what it will, it is very evident, that the few who are said to be chose, must be understood of particular persons, and not of nations or societies.

When it is said, "For the elects sake these days shall be shorten'd, and, if it were

^d John x. 26.

possible, they should deceive the very elect; and he shall send his angels, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other ^c." These passages speak of particular persons, and not of nations; as the redeemed are said to be out of "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ^f;" when it is said, "If it be possible, they shall deceive the elect;" by the elect some would have to be understood the persevering Christians ^g: But this is a very absurd interpretation of the word, because, in the nature of things, these cannot be deceived; whereas our Saviour founds the impossibility of their being deceived upon the immutable decree of God, securing them as his elect from being deceived by false christs, and false prophets. If it is said by the elect here are to be meant the faithful or believers, this will not at all enervate the argument; for men are believers because they are elected, and not elected because they are believers; and because they are elected, therefore they shall not be finally deceived.

When the apostle says, "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son ^h;"

^c Matt. xxiv. 22, 24, 31.
Discourse.

^f Rev. v. 9.

^g Whitby's

^h Rom. viii. 29.

this place cannot be understood of nations, but of particular persons. So in that famous controverted chapter ⁱ, though we allow, that the election of the Jews, as a nation, is to be consider'd as a part of the election there spoke of; yet it is beyond all doubt that a personal election is also intended. This is evident, not only from the instances of Jacob and Esau, but of Pharaoh, and the many declarations, objections and answers, thrown about in that same chapter ^k.

The "remnant according to the election of grace," of which the apostle speaks ^l, must be meant of particular persons, and informs us of an election out of an election; "All are not Israel that are of Israel," says the apostle ^m: All Israel were a chosen people, as a body and nation; but the apostle speaks of a remnant chose out of this elect body, and this must refer to individuals. This is further confirm'd, from the former part of the chapter; "Hath God (says the apostle) cast away his people? God forbid ⁿ." q. d. He has not done so, far be it from him to do so, "for I

ⁱ Rom. ix.

^k For further satisfaction, I refer the reader to Mr. Ridgley's incomparable Body of Divinity, p. 224, &c. to Dr. Edwards's Veritas Redux, p. 139, &c. compared with Dr. Whitby's Discourse, p. 45, 46.

^l Rom. xi. 5.

^m Chap. ix. 6.

ⁿ Chap. xi. 1.

also am an Israelite ;” and if he had cast off all Israel, he had cast me off: “ God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew °,” though God has rejected the Jews, as an elect body ; yet he has not cast away his people, those whom he foreknew, and chose to be his peculiar people among this body. God had always a chosen people among Israel, a people whom he designed to save with an “ everlasting salvation ¢,” and them he never rejected: In Elias’s time he had a chosen number among Israel, and, says the apostle, “ even at this present time there is a remnant, according to the election of grace ¢.”

When the apostle says, “ I endure all things for the elect’s sake ¢,” it must be understood of particular persons, and not of general bodies ; because it is added, “ that they also, together with him, may obtain the salvation, which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory,” viz. the salvation which is to be had in Christ, or which is laid up in Christ, their Head, for them, to eternal glory ; to the eternal glory of God, who had chose them to this salvation, and laid it up in Christ for them ; or to their eternal glory, when they obtain this salvation. A learned author tells

° Rom. xi. 1.
 ¢ Tim. ii. 10.

 Isai. xlv. 17.

¶ Rom. xi. 4, 5.

 Whitby’s Discourse.

us, that for the elects sake, is no more than for the sake of Christians, who are a chosen generation: But if, by Christians, he means no more than nominal ones, the context refutes this interpretation: If, by Christians, he intends real believers, such who shall obtain salvation, these are properly the elect of God; who therefore shall believe and obtain salvation, because they are elect.

Thus have I mentioned several places of scripture wherein a personal election is to be understood, in contradistinction to a national one, or an election of communities. I might farther produce those texts which speak of an election to the internal means of salvation; such as faith, sanctification, and holiness; which, as they prove that election is not for faith and good works foreseen, do also demonstrate a particular and personal election: As, for instance, where it is said, that those who love God, are "called according to his purpose"; even that purpose which he purposed in himself before all ages: And when it is said, "Whom he foreknew, he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son"; not merely in a way of suffering, but of sanctity and holiness, as both the preceding and following context

[†] Rom. viii. 28.

[¶] Jer. 29.

plainly proves ; so God is said to choose us, in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that we should be “ holy and without blame before him in love ^w :” And the apostle, in another place, says, “ We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them ^x .” Paul calls himself an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the “ faith of God’s elect ^y ;” where, by faith, we are not to understand the doctrine of faith, which all who enjoy the gospel have, but that faith which is peculiar to the elect ; so we read of persons who are “ elect to obedience ^z .” Now, in all these places, election must be understood as special ; for faith and holiness are not of nations, but of particular persons properly.

Before I leave this head, it will not be amiss for me to observe, that the scriptures not only speak frequently of a particular personal election, in contradistinction to a general election of nations or communities ; but they often speak of an election of persons, as determinate and certain, in opposition to an indeterminate and uncertain number ; as when our Saviour bids his disciples rejoice, because their “ names

^w Eph. i. 4.^x Chap. ii. 10.^y Tit. i. 1.^z 1 Pet. i. 2.

are written in heaven^a;" not as disciples chose to an office, but as Christians chose to salvation: So Christ is said to "call his sheep by name^b;" and "to know his sheep^c;" and he says, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice^d;" and in another place, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory^e." We read also of the general assembly and church of the first born, whose "names are written, or enrolled, in heaven^f;" and, in many places of the Revelation, we are told of persons whose names are, and are "not written in the Lamb's book of life^g," to shew that the number of the elect and reprobate is determinate. Thus much may serve to prove a personal election.

(2.) I shall now produce some of those scriptures which assert an election to salvation, in opposition to those who tell us that election refers only to the external means of salvation.

I don't remember that when salvation is mention'd, in scripture, unless it has some other words accompanying it, which de-

^a Luke x. 20. ^b John x. 3. ^c Ver. 14. ^d Ver. 16.
^e John xvii. 24. ^f Heb. xii. 23. ^g Rev. iii. 5. xii. 8. xvii. 8. xxi. 27.

termine its meaning to be so, it does ever denote only the external means of salvation; except it be in two passages, where “salvation is said to be of the Jews^h ;” and, by the fall of the Jews, “salvation is said to come to the Gentilesⁱ .” However, that there is an election to salvation, distinct from an election to outward means and privileges, may be argued,

[1.] From those forecited places which speak of election to faith, and sanctification, and good works, and obedience, and a conformity to the image of Christ; for if salvation, even eternal life, is, in the scripture declaration, annexed to, and connected with faith and holiness, then when persons are said to be chosen to these, it must be presumed that they are chosen to salvation by these.

[2.] This may also be proved from those scriptures which make mention of a kingdom, and a glory “prepared, for certain persons, from the foundation of the world.” As where our Saviour answers the mother of Zebedee’s children, who requested of him, that he would grant that her two sons might sit, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left, in his kingdom; saying, “To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give; but it

^h John iv. 22.

ⁱ Rom. xi. 11.

shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father ^k," q. d. It is not mine to give, that is, to every one, but to those only, or except to those ^l, for whom it is prepared of my Father; namely, by an eternal appointment and predestination: Thus the kingdom is said to be "prepared from the foundation of the world ^m." If therefore there is a kingdom and glory prepared for some persons, from the foundation of the world, God must be supposed to choose or design some persons, from the foundation of the world, to possess and enjoy this kingdom and glory; and this is, no doubt, what John intends, when he says, that those who are with God, are "chosen ⁿ."

[3.] No man can fairly deny that an election to salvation is intended by our Saviour, when he says to his disciples; "I speak not of you all, I know whom I have chosen ^o." In another place he says, "Have not I chose you twelve, and one of you hath a devil? In one place Christ says, he had chose them twelve; in the other, he plainly shews, that he had not chose them all, but asserts, I know whom I have chose. No one will have the front to affirm, that our Saviour, in these declarations, contradicts himself, and therefore

^k Matt. xx. 23.
ⁿ Rev. xvii. 14.

^l Ἰσχυρὸς οἶς.
^o John xiii. 18.

^m Matt. xxv. 34.

there must be a sense, in which both the propositions are true ; therefore the usual distinction I take to be just, when Christ says he had chose them twelve, it must refer to external privileges, to discipleship; and when he says, of the same twelve, I speak not of you all, I know whom I have chose, his choosing here must refer to salvation, even to eternal life. Judas was chose to the honour of discipleship, but he was not chose to salvation, because he betray'd his Lord, and went to his place without repentance. If we were to suppose our Saviour to paraphrase on his own words, he would give the sense of them in language to his purpose: " Though one of you, my disciples, is a devil, a traitor, and shall fall away to destruction, yet I have chose the rest of you to eternal life, which you shall infallibly obtain."

[4.] This may be further argued, from what the apostle says to the Thessalonians, about their election ; " Knowing, brethren, beloved, your election of God ^{P.}" In which words, by their election, nothing less can be intended, than an election to salvation, as is apparent, both from the foregoing and following context; " Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of

hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God, and our Father^a:" "For our gospel came not to you in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; and ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost; so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia^r." Now when the apostle brings in these evidences, as the foundation of his knowing their election of God, he cannot hereby intend their election to the enjoyment of the gospel only, for this he knew without these evidences; he must therefore mean their election to eternal life, which he knew by their faith, love, patience, holiness, and by the power of the gospel upon their hearts; for "our gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power." Had it come in word only, it would have been a sufficient proof of their election to the enjoyment of it; but when it is said to come with power, this is an evidence of a further election, even to salvation.

[5.] We might also argue an election of particular persons to salvation, from that exhortation of Peter to the believing strangers; "Wherefore the rather, brethren,

^a 1 Thess. i. 3.

^r Ver. 5, 6, 7.

give diligence to make your calling and election sure †." Here, by calling and election, the apostle cannot mean their calling and election to the gospel, for of this they were sure before; nor would their assurance of this prevent their fall, nor procure that an entrance should be minister'd to them abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which he tells them their making their calling and election sure would do †. It may be said, if, by election, be meant the eternal purpose of God to save them, why does he exhort them to make their election sure, when it was sure already? for the "purpose of God, according to election, shall stand." To this it may be replied: It was sure, indeed, in the immutable decree of God, but it might not be sure to them; they might not have an assurance in their own souls of their election; and therefore the apostle, in order to their establishment and comfort, advises them to make their calling and election sure to themselves, or to make their election certain by their vocation.

[6.] We have scriptures which positively assert an election to salvation. And, besides our text, which holds forth this truth, in direct terms, we read of the vessels of mercy, which God hath "before pre-

† 2 Pet. i, 10.

† Ver, 10, 11.

pared to glory^u;" before prepared, even in his eternal purpose; for if they had prepared themselves, by their faith, for glory, they would improperly be called vessels of mercy; nor would this preparing of themselves be at all agreeable to the meaning of the text, which expressly says, that God had before prepared them to glory. Again, we are said to be predestinated to an inheritance; in whom we have obtained an inheritance, or a right to an inheritance, "being predestinated thereto, according to the purpose of him, who works all things after the counsel of his own will^w." Now what is the inheritance that the apostle says they were predestinated to? No other than the inheritance among the saints in light; the "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fades not away, which is reserved in heaven for them^x;" the inheritance of the children of God, and of which the Holy Spirit is the earnest. Now this inheritance, to which they were predestinated, they are said to obtain, because they were "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession^y." Again, the apostle tells the

^u Rom. ix. 23.^w Eph. i. 11.^x 1 Pet. i. 4.^y Eph. i. 13, 14.

Theſſalonians, that God had not “ appointed them to wrath, but to obtain ſalvation by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt ^z; which appointment is no other than God’s election of them to obtain ſalvation, according to the explication of it in our text, where it is ſaid, of theſe ſame Theſſalonians, that God had, “ from the beginning, choſe them to ſalvation.” Beſides theſe ſeveral texts, we read of many that were “ ordained to eternal life ^a.” This, I know, is a text very much controverted; but, as I have not room to enter into the litigations upon it, I will take it for granted that the tranſlation is juſt, and refer thoſe who deſire further ſatisfaction to compare the criticisms and explications of others ^b.

Thus have I laid before you thoſe ſcriptures which prove a particular election to ſalvation, in refutation of their opinion, who tell us, that election is only of nations and ſocieties, and not of particular perſons, and only to the enjoyment of the goſpel, church privileges, and the external means of ſalvation, and not to ſalvation it ſelf.

^z 1 Theſſ. v. 9.

^a Acts xiii. 48.

^b Whitby’s Diſcourſes, p. 57, 58, 59, 60. Edwards’s *Veritas Redux*, p. 65, 66, 67. Ridgley’s *Body of Divinity*, p. 228, 229, 230, 231. where a vile miſrepresentation of Dr. Whitby’s is reply’d to.

To sum up this argument: Whereas it is suggested, that it is not easy to imagine how the apostle Paul should know who were elected to salvation in any church, without a special revelation; nay, that he did not know this, because he speaks of some who would fall away, and cautions all against it. To this I would beg leave to reply, by observing, that it is very evident that the apostle did speak of particular persons, as elect to salvation; which certainly he would not have done, had he not known them to be such; that we are not able to prove that he did not certainly know whom God had chose to salvation; that he had a spirit of discerning, and why might he not know the elect from this spirit? That God did give him a special revelation, as to this matter, is not easy to disprove; that he had many peculiar marks given him of their election, from whence he knew it; that though he sometimes wrote to the churches, as professing societies of Christians, yet, at other times, we find him addressing himself to them as persons elected to salvation; that he might write to the churches in general, as elect, though some few of them, by falling away, should appear to be otherwise. Though we were to allow that

some, in the churches, to whom the apostle wrote, did fall away, yet it will be hard to prove that they were of the number that he stiled elect to salvation; seeing, after his time, many might be added to the churches, who might prove reprobates. But, however, the cautions and exhortations that the apostle gave to the churches, are no way inconsistent with his knowing them to be elect to salvation; for though, as elect, they could not miss of salvation, yet they were to obtain it in the use of means, such as cautions and directions, which made these highly necessary; nay, had the apostle known any particular church to be non elect, he would never have caution'd and advis'd it at all.





S E R M O N II.



2 THESS. ii. 13.

*We are bound to give thanks
always to God for you, bre-
thren, beloved of the Lord,
because God hath, from the
beginning, chose you to salva-
tion, through sanctification of
the Spirit, and belief of the
truth.*



IN order to treat of the doctrine of particular election, from this text, I proposed to explain it, and I gave the various senses of the word "Election," especially in the book of God, and laid down the different opinions of persons concerning it. My second

head was to prove that God has immutably designed the salvation of a certain number of Adam's children; the truth of this doctrine I argued from the divine perfections, and then came to examine what proof we have of this doctrine from the Word of God: I produced such texts as prove a personal election, in contradistinction to a national one, and then offer'd such as assert an election to salvation, in opposition to those who affirm, that election refers only to the means of salvation, or to church privileges; there is another thing I proposed under this head, and to that I shall proceed.

7 (3.) I am now to prove the certain salvation of a chosen people, or that all those whom God elected to salvation shall be saved, and to refute the notion of a conditional mutable election.

God did not determine to save all men, upon uncertain conditions, nor has he alter'd his purpose as to any that he determined to save; but all those whom he elected, with a design to save them, shall believe, be holy, and obtain eternal life. We may as well suppose, that any of God's elect should be without the necessary means of salvation, as imagine that any of them should miss of it at last: If any of God's chosen should fall short of eternal life, there would be no difference between them and the reprobate;

probate; especially, if, as some affirm, the reprobate may be saved, as well as the elect fall away: But this is to confound both reason and scripture. The elect shall be saved; this I might prove, from the wisdom and power of God: For if God has designed to save any persons; then they must be saved; otherwise God must repent, and change his mind concerning them, or be overpower'd by some superior agency of theirs; to suppose either of which, is not only to degrade, but deny the divine perfections. This might be proved from the decrees in general. If the decrees of God, in general, are absolute and immutable, then this of election must be so; but the former proposition we have before confirm'd, and the latter is an undeniable conclusion from it: If election is an absolute purpose of God to save any, independent of any conditions to be perform'd by them, which may render this purpose effectual to their salvation, then it must be unchangeable; and if it is an unchangeable purpose of God to save, then all those whom he thus purposed to save, must necessarily and infallibly be saved; nothing can hinder, prevent, or disannul their salvation. This may also be argued from the intercession and declaration of Christ; who thus said, whilst on earth, "Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given

me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me ^a.” “ I give my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand ^b.” Now both these places refer not only to Christ’s disciples, that then were, in particular, but to all the elect of God, to all who shall afterwards believe through their word. This may also be proved, from what our Saviour said of the elect, that it “ is impossible they should be deceived ^c,” i. e. so far deceived and carried away, by false christs, as to miscarry of salvation. This might also be strongly argued, from that passage of the apostle, where, having spoke of the wicked apostacy of some, he said, “ Nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his ^d.” This truth stands with unshaken firmness on that text, where God, who cannot lye, is said “ to promise eternal life to his elect, before the world began ^e.” Those places also would yield no small proof in the case, where it is said, that Christ’s “ people shall be willing, in the day of his power ^f ;” and that “ all that the Father gave to him, shall

^a John xvii. 24. ^b Chap x. 28. ^c Matt. xxiv. 24. ^d 2 Tim. ii. 19. ^e Tit. i. 1, 2. ^f Psal. cx. 3.

come to him ²:" For that by Christ's people, and those who were given to him, the elect, and not actual believers, must be intended, is plain, because they are called Christ's people, and are said to be given to him, before they are willing, and before they come to him ; but they shall be willing, and they shall come to him. If to what has been offer'd were added all those texts of scripture, where mention is made of the names of the elect being written in heaven, and in the book of life ; they would help abundantly to confirm the truth under consideration, viz. that all the elect shall be saved. But I pass these by, though they might have been more largely insisted on, to good advantage ; and I proceed to take notice of those texts, where both the means and end are expressly attach'd to, and connected with the decree.

[1.] I would mention some scriptures where the means are connected with the decree. And here I would only offer three ; each of which assures us, that there is an indissoluble conjunction between the means of salvation, and election to salvation by those means. While Paul was preaching at Antioch, some contradicted and blasphemed ; others received his word

² John vi. 37.

with gladness. Now the reason of this, as assign'd by the historian, is the election of God; "As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed^h;" whereby we are told, that all those who then believed, were ordained of God to eternal life; and therefore they believed, because they were so ordained. Some, indeed, for the word Ordained, would have Disposed to be set down; but I see no reason to vary from our translation, because the original word generally conveys to us the same idea that we have by the word Ordained, viz. some purpose of another concerning us, and not any inward disposition of our own; or if we translate it disposed, it will not follow that it was a disposition of their own, but they were disposed, i. e. by the decree and providence of God, or set apart for eternal life, and so God gave them faith, as the necessary means of their salvation. I cannot take the word to intend any internal disposition of our own, because, whatever inclinations men may have to happiness abstractly considered, I cannot see how persons, who are represented, in scripture, as "enmity against Godⁱ," and as saying to the Almighty, "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways^k," can be supposed of themselves to have any

^h Acts xiii. 48.ⁱ Rom. viij. 7.^k J b xxi. 14.

inward inclination to eternal life, as it consists in the enjoyment of God, and can no otherwise be obtain'd, than by faith and holiness. Besides, if this was the sense of the word, then either their faith, which followed this their disposition, was of their own effecting, or of the operation of God; if it was of their own effecting, then in vain do the scriptures tell us, that "faith is the gift of God^l," and the "fruit of the Spirit^m;" if it was of the operation of God, that is, if it was given of God to them to believe, then this was either the consequence of his ordination, or the result of their disposition; if the former, this militates against the sense of the word, as before given from some; if the latter, then the operations of God must depend on our previous dispositions, and God would be obliged to give faith to all who find in themselves a disposition to eternal life, and so he would be despoil'd of the freeness of his gifts. In fine, I don't apprehend how the word can denote a present disposition, because, if so, it might equally be said of all that heard the apostle, as well as of these that believed, for all men are disposed to happiness; and then the original word should have been in the present, whereas it is in the preterperfect tense, and signi-

^l Eph. ii. 8.^m Gal. v. 22.

fies something done before, and not a present disposition.

Another scripture to our purpose is this; “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ; according as he has chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him, in love ⁿ.” God chose them that they might be holy, and, that his purpose might not be frustrated, he blessed them with all spiritual blessings, even those blessings which were necessary to make them holy, and without blame before him in love. A little after, the apostle, speaking of himself, and the believing Ephesians, says, “We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God has before ordained, that we should walk in them ^o. From these words it is evident, that their new creation or regeneration was the result of a divine decree; they were created to good works, because God had before ordained them to walk in them. Thus we see how the means of salvation are connected with, and confined to election.

[2.] I would now take notice of those scriptures that speak of the elect’s obtaining

ⁿ Eph. i. 3, 4.

^o Chap. iii. 10.

both the end and the means. And the first I would mention, is that where the apostle gives us the golden and indissoluble chain of grace ; “ Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, them he also glorified ^p.” Let us take these words which way we will, read them backwards or forwards, they tell us, that election and salvation, both initial and final, are undivided, and inseparably united together. Should we ask, Who are they that are predestinated ? The text tells us, those, and only those, who are effectually called, justified, and glorified. Should it be further asked, Who are they that are glorified ? The answer must be, Those who are justified and called : And who are those ? Those whom God did predestinate. “ Moreover, whom he did predestinate.” Add to this what the apostle says of Israel ; “ Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for ; but the election hath obtain’d it, and the rest were blinded ^q.” What was it that Israel sought after ? Nothing less than righteousness and life, justification and salvation. Now though Israel, as a body or nation, did not obtain this which he sought after, yet the election, or

^p Rom. viii. 30.^q Chap. xi. 7.

the elected, among Israel did. I would only farther mention that of the apostle ; “ Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling ;” and this “ not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began .” If this text stands in need of any explication, you have it in these words ; “ After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appear’d; not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost ; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour ; that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life .”

Thus have I endeavoured, in the plainest, fullest, and briefest way I could, to vindicate and maintain the immutable purpose of God to save a determinate number of fallen Adam’s posterity. The arguments from the divine perfections will appear, I hope, to be founded upon the highest reason ; and the scriptures, ranged in their order, are, I think, pertinent and strong ; each one defensible in its reference to the particular topick it is brought un-

“ 2 Tim. i. 9.

“ Tit. iii. 4, 5, 6, 7.

der, and, all taken together, contain an invincible argument to prove the doctrine of absolute particular election. I have endeavour'd to avoid, as much as I could, the repeating of the same text over again; but, according to the different turn of the argument, it was sometimes unavoidable.

I could produce many authorities to confirm this doctrine, but I choose to have it rest on scripture, and not on human testimonies; though it were to be wished that many of those who have *ex animo*, and in open court, subscribed to the seventeenth Article [†] of the Church of England, did pay a more decent and becoming regard to the doctrine evidently contained in it, and not deny, misrepresent, ridicule, and revile it, as they do.

III. I am now to consider the arguments and objections brought against the doctrine

[†] Of Predestination and Election.

“Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, he hath constantly decreed, by his counsel secret to us, to deliver, from curse and damnation, those whom he hath chose in Christ out of mankind, to bring them, by Christ, to everlasting salvation: Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season, they, through grace, obey the calling, they be justified freely, they be made sons of God by adoption, they be made like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ, they walk religiously in good works, and, at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.”

of

of particular election, as it has been stated and proved.

Having, as I hope, so abundantly confirm'd the truth of the doctrine, there is less need for me to take up much room in answering the objections brought against it. When a truth is once well established, the objections brought against it are the less to be regarded ; but where the positive proof is weak, objections become strong arguments. Therefore, though what has already been offer'd may be thought sufficient to drive all cavils before it ; yet, to prevent any staggerings in our minds, and to establish our faith more firmly in this great article, it cannot be amiss for me to lay down, and to canvas particularly, some of the objections that are brought by our opponents against it. And here I might take notice of those objections that are brought against our doctrine, which are founded upon the universality of Christ's death, the nature and sufficiency of free will to salvation, and the supposed defectibility of the saints. But as the opinions from which such objections are drawn, are themselves false and unsound, which it is the province of some of my brethren to prove, I shall not attempt to interfere with those who are to come after me, but shall leave the objections to fall to the ground, as they necessarily will, when the doctrines of particular

ticular redemption, of efficacious and invincible grace, and of the infallible perseverance of the saints are established in their order. I might also take notice of the objection made against our doctrine, that it has a tendency to drive persons into despair; but as the same objection will come with equal force against the doctrine taught by our opponents, I shall not spend time particularly to refute it; but whether an opinion that does not secure the salvation of one single person, nay, which makes the salvation of each man barely possible, as depending on the feeble and fickle will of man, has not a greater tendency to drive persons into despair, than a doctrine that ascertains the salvation of millions, upon the immutable decree of God, the impartial reasoner will easily determine. The main objections that are brought against our doctrine, and which I shall apply myself to answer, are, such as are form'd from the general love and good will of God to mankind; from the general commands, exhortations, wishes, and expostulations of God with men; from its making ordinances useless; and the pretences, that it weakens mens regards to good works, and encourages licentiousness; that it has a natural tendency to prevent endeavours after salvation; and that it is contrary to the justice and mercy of God.

I. It is objected to the doctrine of absolute and particular election, that it militates against the general love and good will of God to mankind, so frequently express'd in the sacred scriptures; "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life ^u." "God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth ^w." Now how can it, will some say, consist with these general declarations of the love and good will of God to men, to assert, that he has chose only some of this world, and these all to salvation? To this objection I would thus reply: If, in fact, God has chose some only of mankind to salvation, as has been proved, it is weak and vain to object, that this is contrary to his general declarations of love and good will to men; for we are sure, as the scriptures are uniform, that there must be a harmony and consistency between the doctrine and these declarations, though we, it may be, are not able fully to discern it. It is beyond all contradiction, that the terms "World" and "All," are frequently, in scripture, taken in a limited sense, and cannot admit of an universal meaning; and, whenever they are connected with

^u John iii. 16.^w 1 Tim. ii. 4.

salvation, they are always, I think, taken in a restrained sense." The term *World*, in the forecited place, cannot be taken in an universal sense, because God did not so love the angels; nor did he so love every individual man and woman, as to give his only begotten Son for them: If God spared not his own Son, but deliver'd him up for all mankind, how comes it about that he does not freely bestow salvation on all mankind? for the apostle Paul says, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things^x;" whereby he plainly declared, that God will certainly bestow all saving blessings on those for whom he gave his Son: So when God says, he will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, the term "*All*" cannot be taken in an universal latitude, because all men are not actually saved; and many do not come to that knowledge of the truth, whereby they may be saved, being destitute of the gospel, the means of salvation. If God will have all men to be saved, how comes it about that all are not saved, since God does whatever he will? To say that God wills all men universally to come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved, when he does not

^x Rom. viii. 32.

send the means of knowledge and salvation to millions, is to suppose that God wills an impossibility : “ I am, says Christ, the way, and the truth, and the life ; no man cometh to the Father but by me : ” “ Neither is there salvation in any other ; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved ; ” besides Jesus Christ. If the terms “ World ” and “ All, ” are to be taken in an universal meaning, then God would be said to love all the world, so as to give his Son for them, and, at the same time, not so to love them, as to give them salvation by him, which to me appears absurd ; nay, according to this, God would love and will the salvation of unbelievers, as well as believers, which would be to love and hate the same persons, and to will both their damnation and salvation at the same time.

When therefore it is said, that God so loved the world, &c. by the term World we must either understand the human race, in opposition to the fallen angels, whom God did not so love as to give his Son for them, or the Gentile world, in contradistinction from the Jews ; in which sense, the evangelist John frequently makes use of the term, both in his gospel and epistles ; or by it we may understand the world of

† John xiv. 6.

* Acts iv. 12.

the elect, who shall believe in him, and be saved by him. And thus the phrase, "Whosoever believes in him," may be considered as exegetical of the means whereby those whom God loved, and for whom he gave his Son, shall have everlasting life, even by faith in Christ. When it is said, God will have all men to be saved, we must either understand the term "Will," not of his decreeing, but approving will, signifying how agreeable the conversion and salvation of sinners is to him, and that he is well pleased with all that are saved; or if we understand it of the effective will and purpose of God, by all men, we must either mean men of all nations, people, and languages, who are said to be "redeemed to God by Christ's blood^a;" or men of all relations, ranks, and conditions, which is the plain meaning that the context leads to; or otherwise we are necessarily drove into this scandalous absurdity, that God is disappointed of his will, as to the salvation of a great many; for nothing is more certain than this, that all men, in fact, are not saved.

2. I come now to consider the objection against particular election, which is taken from the general commands, exhortations, wishes, and expostulations of God. It

^a Rev. v. 9.

may be said, if God has designed to save some only, and has determined not to give his grace to many, whereby they may believe, repent, and be obedient, how comes it about that he should, in his Word, command all men to believe, repent, and be obedient to his laws, with promises of life to them who conform, and threatnings of death to those who continue disobedient; that he should exhort all men to repent and turn to him, to come to him, to believe, and to be converted; that he should wish as he does; “O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always! O that my people had hearken’d to me, and Israel had walked in my ways!” That he should expostulate, as he does; “Why will ye die, O house of Israel? O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be? How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee? O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gather’d thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not: Ye will not come to me that you may have life^b.” We have the same language in almost innumerable other

^b 1 John iii. 13. Acts xvii. 30. John iii. 36. Acts iii. 19. Ezek. xviii. 30. Isai. lv. begin. Deut. v. 29. Psal. lxxxii. 13. Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Jer. xiii. 27. Chap. iv. 14. Matt. xxiii. 37. John v. 40.

places of scripture. Now to what end may it be said, are all these commands, exhortations, wishes, expostulations? Is not this for God to delude his creatures? Is it not inconsistent with the divine sincerity? For God to make these general and solemn declarations, and, at the same time, to determine, from eternity, that many of those to whom these declarations are made, shall not believe, repent, be obedient, and be saved.

To this objection, which I have endeavour'd to set in the clearest and strongest light, that the objectors themselves can desire, I would reply in general: That these, and such-like passages of scripture, do not at all tell us what God designs to do for us, and with us, but only informs us what is our duty, what God requires of his reasonable creatures, what is agreeable to his reveal'd will; that faith, repentance, and obedience, are things which he approves of, and is delighted with; that salvation is consequent upon, and connected with faith and holiness, and that the effect and consequence of unbelief, impenitence, and disobedience, will be everlasting destruction. But, to be more particular,

(1.) As to the general commands and exhortations, I would reply: That many of the commands of scripture refer only to external acts of reformation, which rea-

sonable creatures may perform, even tho' God denies them that grace, which is necessary to salvation. Mens being non-elect does not prevent their acting as men, and performing many external duties, which God requires, besides many commands are directed to those to whom God had already given his grace; and, in many places of scripture, the promises and threatnings refer only to temporal rewards and punishments; but we will allow that God does command all men to believe, repent, and be obedient to him. It must also, on the other hand, be granted, that no man has power in himself savingly to believe, repent, and obey; for if these things are of our own operation, they could not be called the gifts of God, nor would God be said to work in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure, nor should we have the several promises in the scriptures, that God will renew and convert us; nor need we to pray to God for his grace, that we may believe and be converted; nor are we obliged to render thanks to God, that we believe and are obedient; nor have we any just reason to ascribe the glory of our faith and repentance to God. No one will presume to assert that all men do believe, repent, and are obedient, notwithstanding the general commands and exhortations of God, backed with the promises of life and threat-

threatnings of death. If therefore God does design that all those to whom his commands and exhortations are made known, should comply with them, how comes it about that so many, in fact, do not do it? Should it be said, this is owing to the perverse will of man; to this we would reply, that the perverseness of will is the same in the elect, as in the reprobate; and if the perverseness of man's will could hinder the purpose of God from taking effect, then none of God's elect might believe and be saved, but all the elect shall believe, repent, be holy, and be saved, as we have before proved. But farther, this is to suppose that God has made a creature that he cannot manage and govern, and that his determinations and designs are to be subjected to the will of man; so that if man will, they shall be accomplished; but if man opposes them, almighty power itself cannot bring them to effect. Wherefore, upon the whole, it is very plain and evident, that the general commands and exhortations to believe and repent, do not oppose the doctrine of particular election, or the purpose of God to give faith, &c. to some only; nor can we from them form an argument, or draw a just conclusion, that God does design that all men universally should believe and repent, because, in fact, all do not. But though God does not

determine to give saving grace to all those to whom his commands and exhortations are made known, yet are they not, as some may suggest, vain and useless, which will appear from the following considerations.

God's commands do not tell us what God will do for us, but they inform us what we ought to do for him. As they are not the measure of our power, so neither are they the rule of God's decrees ; for if so, God's commands would not be a directory to us, to shew us what we ought to do ; but they would rather be a law to God himself, telling him what he must do: He could not be said to command us, but rather to command himself. God is not obliged to bestow his saving grace on any, or to restore to any man the power of obeying his precepts, which he once had but lost: Herein he acts according to his own sovereign will, and communicates his saving grace to whom he pleases ; and these are only his elect, or those to whom from eternity he designed to give it. God, in giving his grace, and making his elect obedient to his calls and commands, does generally make use of the promises and threatnings of his word, as suited to work upon their hopes and fears. Though God determines to make some only obedient to his commands, and to leave others in their natural enmity and rebellion ; yet it is
highly

highly proper and convenient that even the wicked should know their duty, that their mouths may be stopped, and that they may have no reason to complain that God did not inform them what it was he required of them. When God commands all men to believe and repent, &c. it is in order to convince men of their weakness and inability, to excite his chosen people to pray to him for his grace and Spirit, and to lead them to Christ, who alone can give them faith and repentance, and thoroughly furnish them for every good work. No man can prove, and therefore no man ought to assert that he is a non-elect person, and shall not be saved, or that God has determined not to give him grace to be obedient to his commands; to prevent therefore any such rash and despairing assertions, the command is promiscuous to all men to believe, and we are told he that believes shall be saved. God, in commanding men, does not consider them under the distinctive characters of elect or reprobate; he does not declare what his secret will towards them is, but considers them as his reasonable creatures, bound in duty to be obedient to him. Though God has, in his eternal decrees, made a manifest difference between some and others, yet in his commands he has made no distinction.

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Thus much may serve in answer to the objection against our doctrine, taken from the general commands and exhortations of God to believe, repent, and be obedient, with the promises and threatnings annexed thereunto.

(2.) I come now to consider the objection drawn from the wishes and exhortations of God, as before laid down. To which I would reply, that many of those things which God exhortates with men about, are what they had in their power to do, or avoid, as when he refers to external acts of reformation, and to temporary judgments. God's exhortations are generally with his own people, and do not refer to all men universally. God cannot, properly speaking, be said to wish any thing, because this would argue great weakness and imperfection in him. To suppose God to wish any thing to be done, which it was in his own power to effect, is to charge him with egregious folly. When God therefore, speaking after the manner of men, is said, any where in his Word, to wish that men would convert themselves, turn to him, and be obedient, we must consider such modes of speaking as only pathetick speeches, designed to convince God's elect of the evil of their ways, and to press on them the observance of their duty to him. It is to shew them their wicked-

wickedness and ingratitude, the justice and equity of God's expectations and demands, and to excite them, by the most moving expressions, to repentance and reformation. God makes use of expostulations and wishes, as well as exhortations and commands, as the means whereby he will convey his saving grace to the hearts of all his chosen ones. If by the wishes of God we are to understand his purposes and designs, that all men believe and repent, and be obedient, whence is it, that he who has the hearts of all men in his hands, "and turns them as the rivers of water, whithersoever he will," does not actually make all men obedient, and that there are such vast numbers which are unbelieving and impenitent?

If it is said, that it is for God to delude men, and to act inconsistently with sincerity, to exhort and command all men to repent, and to expostulate, as he does, with them about their impenitence and disobedience, when he has from eternity determined to deny his grace to a great many, without which they cannot believe, repent, or yield obedience to him; to this I would reply, that it is very evident that these things are fact, viz. that God does thus command, and has thus determined.

It must be own'd to be a very difficult thing to reconcile general declarations, and particular determinations to one another. It is vile for poor short-sighted creatures, because they can't account for all God's words and works, to charge him with a want of sincerity, and with a design to mock and delude his creatures: But, if there is any thing in the suggestion, it will be as strong an objection against the foreknowledge of God, as his decrees. Our opponents allow that God foresees the final impenitence, and obstinate disobedience of millions, and yet, at the same time, he enjoins that the gospel and the means of salvation be published to them, as if they were all to be saved. Now why does God exhort and expostulate with those who were foreknown to be refusers and despisers of them? According to their way of charging others, is this to act sincerely? Is it not rather feigning and dissembling? So that this objection, if it has any weight in it, carries the matter farther than the objectors will care to allow, and recoils, with a strong force, upon their own assertions.

3. It is objected against our doctrine, that it makes ordinances vain and useless; for if God has absolutely, from eternity, determined the salvation of a particular number of mankind only, to what purpose
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are ordinances instituted? The elect may be saved without them, and the reprobate can't be sav'd by them. To this I reply,

(1.) Ordinances are not essential to salvation: If they were, then all who attend them would be saved, and such as had not the opportunity of so doing, would infallibly be lost; but no one will assert that a bare attendance on ordinances will insure salvation; and we dare not affirm that all who have not the opportunity of attending ordinances will be damned. Faith in Jesus Christ is essential to salvation, because the scriptures tell us, that "he who believes shall be saved; but he who believes not, shall be damned^d:" But the scriptures have no where, as I remember, asserted, that he who attends ordinances shall be saved; but he who does not attend them, shall be condemned. Ordinances are the usual means of salvation, but not essential to it. God has obliged us, in a way of duty, to attend them, and has, for our encouragement, promised to own them for good to his people; but he has not obliged himself by them, or confined the communications of his grace to them. This is evident from various instances of conversion, where ordinances have not been made use of.

^d Mark xvi. 16.

(2.) Because the gospel is preached to all men where its sound has reached ; it will not from hence follow, that all may or will be converted by it. In the apostle's time, some believ'd it, and some gain-say'd and blasphem'd. Just so it is in our day, many are called, but few appear to be chose, because few believe ; the gospel is proclaim'd to all, not that all, but that some may be saved.

(3.) The gospel is preach'd to all, because some of all ranks and characters are to be brought home to Christ by it ; and because ministers are to hope well, and to shew their charity to all. All that we preach to may be elect, for any thing we know to the contrary ; however, in every congregation, where the faithful Word is preach'd, there are some who belong to the election of grace ; and though the same overtures are made to all, who hear the gospel, yet none will believe and be saved but the elect, whom God makes willing in the day of his power.

(4.) The preaching of the gospel is promiscuous to all, because ministers can't distinguish between the elect and reprobate : God does not see fit to tell preachers what number he has chose to salvation, of those they minister to, and what number he has refused ; nor has he set any particular mark upon the persons of the one denomination

nomination or the other ; wherefore they are commanded and obliged to declare the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, to all who come under their ministrations.

(5.) Ordinances, properly speaking, were primarily and chiefly designed for the elect only, as the usual and ordinary means, whereby the purpose of God, in their salvation, shall be accomplish'd. God could save his elect without the use of ordinances, but he has been pleased to appoint them, as the common means of conveying his saving grace into their hearts, in order to their enjoying that everlasting life, which he, from eternity designed them to. Therefore he directed his apostles to go and preach in some places, and not in others, because he had a chosen people in those places, to which he sent them^e; and the Lord, by their ministry, added to the church such as should be saved, or such as he had determined to save^f.

(6.) If God, by the general dispensation of the means of grace, designed to save all that come under them, how comes it to pass that all who attend them are not saved ? God can as easily save all, as some, if he has so designed ; for who has resisted his will ? If it is given to persons, under

^e Luke i. 17. Acts xv. 14. Chap. xviii. 9, 10. ^f Acts ii. 47.

ordinances, to believe, God can as easily give faith to all as to some: If faith is of our own operation, then the purpose of God is limited to, and determined by the will of man.

(7.) In administering ordinances, especially in the preaching of the gospel, ministers are not to regard persons as elect or reprobate, but as sinners or saints. It is true, did they not hope, that among the unconverted there might be a chosen people, who should be called in due time, they would have no encouragement to preach to sinners, but would separate the saints, and preach only to them. In our ministry, we cannot be said to preach to persons under the unknown character of elect or reprobate; no, we preach the gospel to all without distinction; we tell sinners of their lost and miserable state, by reason of sin, set Christ before them, as the only Saviour of sinners, exhort them to fly to him for help, to repent of their sins, and to yield obedience to the divine precepts, not knowing who will believe, or gainsay, or what the success of our labour will be; and, while we are thus preaching to all, God lays hold of the heart of one and another, calls them by his efficacious grace, makes them penitent and obedient, and as many as are ordain'd to eternal life believe.

(8.) Though the reprobate cannot be saved by the preaching of the gospel, unless we suppose that God reverses his decrees towards them, yet it is necessary that it should be preached to them, and on several accounts, viz. that they may know their duty, what it is that God requires of them, that they may, under the ministry of the Word, be restrain'd from some gross enormous vices, have their manners somewhat cultivated, and so be made useful to society, less injurious to the pious, and prevent a severer punishment. In fine, it is necessary that the gospel should be preached even to the reprobate, that their mouths may be stopped, and they may be left without excuse; "If I had not come, says Christ of the Jews, and spoken to them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloke (or excuse) for their sin^s." The primary design of God, in sending his gospel and ordinances to any people, is, that the elect thereby may be brought home to himself, and his purpose in their salvation be accomplish'd; that the reprobate are hereby left without excuse, is a secondary and more remote consideration.

Thus we see that the promiscuous preaching of the gospel to all, does not infer that

^s John xv. 22.

all will or may be saved ; but that it is the usual means, whereby the chosen people of God are converted, edify'd, and comforted, and necessary to the reprobate, even though they can't be saved by it : But if the general preaching of the gospel is suppos'd, after all, to carry any argument in it against the doctrine of special election, it stands with equal force as an argument against the divine foreknowledge.

4. I come now to consider the objection against our doctrine, that it weakens mens regards to good works, and tends to encourage licentiousness. To which I would beg leave to reply: Though some, who pretend to believe the doctrine of determinate election, are unmindful of their duty, and immoral in their conversation, it will not, from hence, follow, that the doctrine it self gives countenance to any such misconduct. If God had, indeed, chose men to salvation, without regard had to good works, as a part of it, there would be some ground for the objection ; but when good works are a very constituent part of that salvation which God has designed the elect to, and when they are the principal ground and evidence from whence persons can or may conclude that they are elected ; seeing no man has any right to believe that he is elected of God to salvation, till he is brought to hate sin, and delightfully to per-

perform good works; when these things are so, I cannot conceive how this doctrine can be an enemy to good works, or why persons should deem it so. Those persons who are so bold and foolish as to say, if we are elected, we shall be saved, though we live as we list, do not only reason quite contrary to the design of the decree, but give very plain and strong proof that they have no lot nor portion in this matter. No doctrine in the world has a greater tendency to discourage sin, and promote good works, than this of particular election; for if our election to salvation is of the free grace, goodness, and love of God, what can be a greater argument to repentance than such goodness? What can incite us more to obedience than such love? What can more effectually teach us to live soberly, righteously, and godly, than such grace? Besides, when good works are, even by the purpose of God, affixed, as the very means whereby the elect are to attain their final salvation, and so are made necessary to, and inseparable from it, what can be a more powerful motive to the performance of them than this consideration? Further, the purpose of God, concerning the salvation or destruction of any, cannot annul the relation that we stand in to God, as his creatures, nor our obligation to perform good works: That I am a creature

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of God, and ought, as such to be obedient to him, I know; but I cannot, it may be, know whether I am elect, or reprobate; wherefore what is to me a secret, should never be a bar or discouragement to the performance of those things, which I am bound to do, upon the most manifest evidence. Besides, though good works are not the cause of God's choosing any to salvation, yet they are absolutely necessary and useful, and that not only as an evidence of our election, but to testify our love to God; to promote the glory of God in the world, to convince gainfayers, to be an example to others, and that we may be more fitted for communion with God here, and the enjoyment of him in glory hereafter. In fine, that our doctrine is no encourager of sin, or enemy to holiness and good works, is evident, through grace, in some good measure, by the lives and conversations of those who profess to believe it. It must be granted, as a melancholy truth, that there are too many of orthodox heads, who have sad unsound hearts, and lead very wicked lives; but if practical religion shines forth with greater lustre among any party of Christians more than among others, it is, generally speaking, I say, generally speaking, most conspicuous among the avowers of the Calvinistick Doctrines. I do not say this to fix

a charge of wickedness upon others, far be it from me to be guilty of so much malice and uncharitableness; nor do I affirm this out of a vain ostentation, for who is it that makes men to differ? But when a doctrine is charged, as encouraging licentiousness, if the professors of it appear to be no more wicked than others, nay, to practise and maintain good works as much, if not more, than those who would fix such an unjust consequence upon their doctrine, the objection is so far from weakening, that it has a tendency to establish and confirm our faith, in the doctrine, as according to godliness.

5. It is objected, to the doctrine of particular election, that it has a tendency to prevent endeavours after salvation, and to encourage indolence and presumption. If God has, from eternity, chose a determinate number of persons to salvation, and if these, and no others, shall infallibly obtain it, then does not such a doctrine discourage endeavours, and lead on to sloth and presumption? For if I am not elected, may a person say, to what purpose are all my endeavours for salvation? I can never attain to it by them; and, if I am elected, why should I strive and labour, when my salvation is made sure, by the immutable decree of God? To this I would reply: That the abuse of a doctrine, by some

weak or wicked persons, can never prove a doctrine to be false ; there is no truth but what is liable to be abused. It is absurd and irrational, in its own nature, for any persons to argue at this rate, because this is to draw certain conclusions from uncertain premises. Though God has chose some, and refused others, yet he has not told us who are the particular persons. The certainty of the end, upon the decree of God, is no hindrance or discouragement to the use of suitable means, in order to attain the end, because God has, by his decree, connected the means and the end together ; and we are said to be chose to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. Our Saviour knew very well what was the prefix'd term of his life on earth ; yet he studiously avoided dangers, and escaped the hands of the Jews more than once. God had revealed it to Paul, that none of the passengers, who were in the ship with him, should be lost ; yet he exhorted the seamen to be active, and would suffer none of them to go out of the ship, when they attempted to have saved themselves in the boat.

The apostle Peter exhorts believers to “ give diligence to make their calling and election sure ^h,” though he knew their

election and salvation was sure, by the decree of God: And our Saviour bids all his followers "to strive to enter in at the strait gate," at the same time that he tells them, "many shall strive to enter in, and shall not be ableⁱ." Moreover, the apostle Paul informs us, that "they who run in a race run all, but one only receives the prize^k." No one can win who does not run; all will not win who do run; yet all run. We see then, from hence, that the certainty of the salvation of some, ought to be no hindrance to the endeavours of all to attain it.

Suppose I could assure you of this assembly, that God had determined the certain salvation of one in three, or five, or more or less of you; would not this be a greater encouragement to you all to be found in the use of means, than to be told, that God had decreed the possible salvation of you all, but has not secured the salvation of any one of you? For who will strive so much after that, the attainment whereof is merely possible to every one, as for that which is certain to some, who strive for it? Nay, who will use endeavours at all, that considers his inequality to the work, and that it is next to an impossibility that he should obtain what he is

ⁱ Luke xiii. 24.

^k 1 Cor. ix. 24.

to take pains for? But, on the contrary, if the salvation but of a few is certain, this will be an encouragement to all to seek after it, because each one will be ready to argue, who knows but I may be one of those happy ones, whose salvation God has infallibly determined? Those who oppose our doctrine, are free to allow that all men eventually will not be saved: Now whether their doctrine does not as much discourage endeavours as ours, is no difficult thing to determine; for what more encouragement is given to all to strive, from this declaration, that all will not eventually be saved, than from this, that God does not design the salvation of all men? Our doctrine cannot encourage indolence and presumption, because the means are connected with the end by the purpose of God; because no man has a right to conclude himself an elect person, till he is called and converted, and because presumption, in an allowed course of sin, is absolutely inconsistent with a state of grace, and a strong argument that a person is not an elect of God, whatever his pretences may be.

6. It is objected to our doctrine, that it is contrary to the justice of God, that it narrows his goodness, and limits his mercy: In short, that it is unjust, unkind, and unmerciful in God, to decree the cer-
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tain salvation of some few, and to leave the rest to perish everlastingly. How is it, say our opponents, consistent with the notions that we have of God, as a just, gracious, and merciful Being, that he should, from eternity, determine to give his grace to some few, whereby they shall infallibly be saved; and to deny it to a great many, from whence they must inevitably perish, when all mankind are equally the objects of his justice, goodness, and mercy?

To this we might answer, as the apostle does; “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed, say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus¹?” “Shall not the Judge of the whole world do right^m?” God says, “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid: For he says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion; so then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercyⁿ.” “Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? God forbid^o?” It is an easy thing to charge a scripture truth with being inconsistent

¹ Rom. ix. 20.

33, 14, 15, 16.

^m Gen. xviii. 25.

^o Rom. iii. 5, 6.

ⁿ Rom. ix.

with the perfections of God ; but it is impossible to prove the allegation. It is a wicked thing to charge God with being unjust, unkind, or unmerciful, for doing what he will with his own ; nor can the objection be made good against our doctrine, that it argues injustice, unkindness, and unmercifulness in God : The scriptures give no encouragement for any such charges. It is represented as no derogation to the grace of God, that he called Abraham alone, leaving great numbers to perish ; that he saved only Noah and his family, when all the rest of the world were drowned ; that Lot and his house were preserved, and all Sodom and Gomorrah left to be consumed : Moses never speaks of it as a lessening or disparagement to the goodness of God ; that he chose Israel alone for his peculiar people, who were the fewest of the nations ; nor do I find that our opponents charge God with a want of justice, goodness, or mercy, that he sends the gospel to some nations, when the far greater part of the world are left in darkness and ignorance ; so that we ought to be very tender, in charging the proceedings of divine sovereignty with being opposite to all or any of God's moral perfections. But farther : If it could be prov'd, that God owed all men saving grace, it must be owned to be an unjust thing in him

him to deny it to any; but God is not obliged to give any man saving grace. The number of the elect is not so few as some would represent it to be; they are "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands^p." The reprobate, strictly speaking, are not condemned for not doing that which it was impossible for them to do, because God had refused to give them his saving grace; but for not doing what was in their power, and which they themselves made impossible to be done, by a long course of indulged wickedness. We have as much reason to charge God with injustice, cruelty, and unmercifulness, in condemning and destroying all the fallen angels, as in determining to leave some of fallen mankind to perish: And will any attempt to say it is unjust in God to determine to save only some of mankind, when he would have been just if he had destroyed them all? Or shall we presume to affirm that God is unmerciful, because he has mercy on whom he will have mercy?

The same objection will lie against the divine perfections, from God's not eventually saving all, as from his determination not to save all; for he could save every man if he would; and yet our opponents will not attempt to affirm, that all men

^p Dan. vii. 10. compared with Rev. v. 11.

are saved in the event. God could have created all men perfect, as well as the first man; he could have preserved Adam and all his seed in innocence; or, after man had fallen, and made himself vile and miserable, God could change the hearts of all men, and convert and save them all, if he so pleased. Why then do our opponents charge our doctrine with unmercifulness, when the same charge equally lies against their own opinion?

To proceed a little farther, as to the supposed unmercifulness of our doctrine. For my own part, I confess, that one great reason why I believe and espouse the doctrine of special determinate election, is, because of the mercy of it. I hope I am not mistaken; for, to me, our doctrine appears most to illustrate the mercy of God, and to be most friendly to mankind; nay, there is, in my opinion, no friendship nor mercy in any other doctrine but this. To make this good, be pleased to observe, that all, in fact, are not eventually saved; that no more shall be saved than what are saved; and that all who are saved, are elect to salvation. Our opponents never attempted to affirm that all men are actually saved; no one will pretend to assert that more shall be saved than what are saved; all that are saved, we say, are elected to salvation. Where is the unmercifulness of this

this doctrine ? We do not narrow or confine salvation, but make it, in fact, as extensive in its subjects, as those who oppose themselves to us. The difference between them and us, is not about the number who are saved ; we both agree in that ; but what we differ about is, the manner of their obtaining salvation. We say, they are saved by virtue of the electing love of God ; they say, they are saved because they rightly improve their own free will. We affirm them to be saved in such a way, as ascribes all the glory to God ; the way of salvation which they hold is such, as leaves great room for man to glory. Thus far our doctrine appears to be as merciful as theirs. But farther,

Our opponents scheme makes the salvation of each man but barely possible ; our doctrine makes the salvation of millions of men absolutely certain ; so that hence ours appears to be more merciful than theirs : For I would ask any unprejudiced person, whether a doctrine that secures the salvation of some, whether one in ten, or nine in ten, God only knows, does not better deserve the epithets of friendly and merciful, than a notion that puts the salvation of every one upon a bare possibility, whence it may happen that, even according to their tenets, no one may be saved at last ? Let none call what I am going to say cant,
or

or a declamatory harangue, to captivate the passions. Suppose God was to summons all mankind before him, and to demand a choice of them which of the two schemes they would give into; would they not prefer that which infallibly secures the salvation of a chosen number, to that which puts the salvation of each one upon a dangerous uncertainty? From what has been said, it appears that our doctrine is more merciful than that of our opponents.

I shall venture to go one step higher, and that is, to prove that the doctrine of our opponents is an unmerciful doctrine, because it is so far from ascertaining the salvation of any, that it renders the salvation of each man a moral impossibility. The opinion of those who differ from us, as to the doctrine of election, so far as it relates to salvation, I take to be this: That it is a conditional choice, upon our perseverance in a life of holiness, i. e. if I may give you the sense more fully, in other words, it is God's choosing persons to salvation, upon the conditions of faith, repentance, and perseverance in holiness. Upon this, now let me observe, that they will not allow that God has determined to give to any man this faith, repentance, and perseverance; nay, absolutely deny that God has ordained one single person to faith, repentance, and perseverance to the end;

end; so that the performance of these conditions depends entirely upon the will of man. But, if this is the case, the question, which was once put to our Lord, may very properly be asked here, Who then can be saved? For,

(1.) If the scriptures have represented men as, by nature, in a state of death, to every good work reprobate; not sufficient of themselves to speak a good word, or think a good thought, as not able to do any thing without Christ, and by many such the like declarations; then how is it possible that they should, by their own innate power, ever perform these weighty and extensive conditions?

(2.) If faith, repentance, and perseverance in holiness, are the gifts of God, and God has not designed or determined to give them to any one single person; is it not impossible that any one should believe, repent, and persevere? God does not give good gifts at random, or by accident, without determining both the quality of the gift, and the number of the objects; but “every good and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning^a.” It immediately follows, “Of his own will begat

^a James i. 17.

he us with the word of truth :." God is of one mind, and who can turn him? His purposes, like his nature, are invariable, and, because they are so, his gifts are without repentance, and he quickens and saves whom he will. What are God's actings but the accomplishment of his purposes? Purposes are actions decreed, actions are purposes executed. As the promises of God are the revelation of his purposes of good will, so the actings of God upon his creatures are the execution of his purposes, and the fulfilment of his promises. Well now, if faith, repentance, and perseverance in holiness, are the gifts of God, and he has not purposed to give them to any, then he has not promised to give them to any; and where there is neither purpose in God, nor promise from him, there can be no saving gifts; and if so, how is it possible that any man can be saved?

(3.) If Adam, in innocence, who was created perfect, and with a plenitude of power, to do what God requir'd; if, I say, he did not fulfil the law of nature, how is it possible that we, who are fallen imperfect creatures, should obey the law that we are under? A perfect creature must be much more able to

fect obedience, than an imperfect creature is to yield imperfect ; because, when the nature is once vitiated, it is more difficult to perform one good action, than it is for a perfect nature to yield perfect obedience. Should any say this is begging the question, to assert that we are imperfect creatures, we have as much power for obedience, as Adam ever had. Supposing it, but not granting it, then,

(4.) If Adam did not perform the condition of his covenant, which was to refrain only from eating of the forbidden fruit ; but, upon a temptation of the serpent, did, contrary to his allegiance to God, and the high obligations he was under to comply with the divine command, eat of the fruit of the tree, of which God had said, “ In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die^f ;” If he could not suspend a single act, even tho’ he, it is not improbable, knew this was to be the test of his obedience, and that his own and the fate of his posterity depended upon it ; I say, if he, in these circumstances, without supernatural aids, could not refrain a single act ; how is it possible for us, who are surrounded with innumerable temptations, to perform the conditions of our covenant, to believe, repent, and persevere in holi-

^f Gen. ii. 17.

ness, which require the exertion of millions of positive acts? To suspend acting, is much easier than to put forth an act; but what comparison is there between a perfect man's refraining one act, and an imperfect man's putting forth innumerable acts? When Adam then could not do the former, will any one now presume to say he is able to do the latter? So that, upon the whole, the doctrine of an universal conditional election appears to be unmerciful, while the mercy of God shines with a bright lustre in the doctrine of absolute particular election.

Thus I have finish'd what I design doctrinally from the words. Let the arguments and objections be taken together, compared, and weighed, and I doubt not but the ballance will be found to be in favour of our doctrine; and it will appear evident, that God has decreed, before all worlds, the certain salvation of a determinate number of mankind, and left the rest to themselves. I have designedly studied great plainness of speech, as best suited to the solemnity and importance of the subject, that I might the more readily be understood of all, and that your faith might not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God. I have endeavoured to set the whole matter in the clearest and most obvious light I could, to digest my proofs
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in a natural order, and to represent the objections in the fairest and strongest manner. I hope no one will have reason to say that I have been combating a man of straw of my own making, or fighting with my own shadow; and, should it appear that I have given an invidious, harsh, or false turn, to any argument or objection of our opponents, I should be heartily sorry for it, and most readily acknowledge my fault.

THE APPLICATION.

I. If there is such a doctrine as particular election in scripture, then it ought to be preached. Some absolutely deny the doctrine; others think it improper to be taught, because, they apprehend, that many persons may draw ill consequences from it. But since Christ and his apostles preached it, and since the adversaries are so unwearied in their endeavours to oppose and condemn it, it must well become us, who believe it, to assert and vindicate it, to the best of our power; for if this doctrine is not to be preached, because some do or may abuse it, for the same reason all the special truths of the gospel must be laid aside, as useless or hurtful; and so a Christian must starve, for fear a profane sinner should grow wanton in a plenty of provision. Who are they, generally speaking,

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that

that revile and abuse this doctrine, but the unthinking, giddy, and profane part of the world, who, when they boast of a power to save themselves, make use of it only to their own destruction, and, when they assert good works to be the only way to heaven, are very backward to perform any? Besides this, that there are no real disadvantages that can arise from the prudent preaching of this doctrine; there are several positive advantages that attend the preaching of it. For instance: The gospel cannot be preach'd entire without it; it is the foundation of all those great and precious promises that are contain'd in the bible; the doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ would be little better than a nullity without it; it tends to display the divine sovereignty, and to give us a lively representation of the love and grace of God to sinful men: It is a great comfort and support to Christians, in a time of common defection and temptation; it is an effectual antidote against the swelling pride of man; and is, as I have before observed, one of the most powerful arguments to holiness and good works.

2. Is there an election of particular persons to salvation? then we ought to enquire whether we are of the happy number. How many God has chosen who can tell? But was the number never so few,
every

every one should be putting the question, Lord, is it I? Who knows but I may be a chosen vessel, and the lot may fall upon me? However, I will, by the grace of God, be found in the way of means; I will wait at the pool; I will do the best I can to promote my own salvation. We can lose nothing by endeavouring; nay, when God inclines and enables us to put forth endeavours after salvation, we have good ground to hope that he has a design to save us.

3. Is it through faith and holiness that God chooses persons to salvation, then let us not separate the means from the end, or ever think of getting to heaven without faith and holiness. Let every one be persuaded to mind his duty, being fully assured that duty and privileges, the means and end, are inseparably connected together by the decree of God.

4. Let those be very thankful to God, who have ground to hope that they are chose of him to salvation. Praise is comely for such as you; consider the greatness and freeness of the blessing; to be chose to an eternal crown of glory; to be chose out of a corrupt mass; to be chose when so many learned, rich, and honourable are rejected; to be chose before you had done any good, and without regard to foreseen merit: How great is the mercy! How

rich the grace! Let your souls continually magnify the Lord, and let your hearts rejoice in the God of your salvation; This will be the glorious employment of an eternity in heaven, and it ought to be the delightful practice of all the saints on earth.

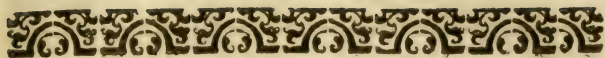
5. Let believers give diligence to make their calling and election sure. You begin at the wrong end when you put the question thus; Am I elected? The question should be, Am I called? You are to make your election sure by your vocation: If you are called, you must be elected; for "whom God predestinated, them he also called." He calls them, not only externally and ministerially by his word; for, in this respect, many are called, though few are chosen; but internally and efficaciously, by his Spirit, making them to listen, and be obedient to his call. Have you then ever been made to see your lost and miserable state by reason of sin? Have you been deeply and inwardly affected at your wretched condition? Have you been enabled to receive and rest upon Jesus Christ, as your only Saviour? Is Christ, in all his offices, precious to you? Do you prize the ordinances of God, and communion with him therein? Is it your desire to recommend the grace of God, and adorn the gospel of

^c Rom, viii. 30.

Christ, by a vertuous and holy conversation? You may then conclude that you are called and elected, and you have a right to take the comfort of it. Be diligent then in this necessary work of examination; converse much with the sacred oracles of God; look narrowly into your own hearts, and pray earnestly to God for the sealing of his Spirit; and if the Spirit of God, by attesting to your vocation, witnesses with your spirits that you are children of God, you may be assured that you were predestinated to this adoption; and if a man is a child, then an heir, an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ: Give diligence then to make your calling and election sure; for if you do these things, you shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministred to you, abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;

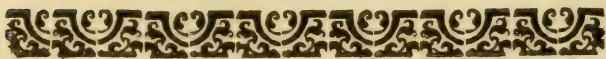
To whom, with the eternal Father, and Holy Spirit, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.





THE
DOCTRINE
OF
ORIGINAL SIN
STATED AND DEFENDED :
IN TWO
SERMONS.

By *PETER GOODWIN*,
Minister of the Gospel.



THE

THE

DOCTRINE

OF

ORIGINAL SIN

AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

IN THE

SERMONS

DELIVERED

AT THE

CHURCH OF ST. MARTIN



S E R M O N I.

ROM. V. 19.

—*By one man's disobedience
many were made sinners.*



THE part allotted me in these exercises, is to endeavour to open and vindicate the doctrine of original sin, a doctrine of very great importance, and wherein we are all highly concerned: It is one of the fundamental truths of our Christian profession: It lies (says the excellent Dr. Owen^a) in the very foundation of all wherein we have to do with God, with respect to our

^a Preface to his Treatise of Indwelling Sin.

pleasing him here, or obtaining the enjoyment of him hereafter. It has a very great influence upon the important truths concerning the person of Christ, his mediation, the fruits and effects of it, and all the benefits we are made partakers of thereby. Without a supposition of this, none of them can be truly known, or savingly believed: Accordingly it is a doctrine that the church of God was in full possession of, and was generally held and acknowledged for the four first centuries, till Pelagius, and his followers denied and disputed against it ^b. But, notwithstanding this was an undoubted article of primitive Christianity, notwithstanding the great importance of it, and the great concernment we all have in it, it is a doctrine that is greatly opposed, and treated with contempt, and profane banter and ridicule, by many in the age in which we live. And as it cannot therefore be deemed unseasonable, so it is highly becoming those who have the real interests of religion at heart, and a just zeal for the pure and uncorrupted doctrines of the gospel, to stand up in the defence of it: Nor can any justly be offended at it, so long as we make use of no unwar-

^b Quis ante prodigiosum discipulum ejus (Pelagii) Cælestium, reatu Adæ omne genus humanum negavit astrictum? Vincentius adversus Hæc. c. 34.

rantable methods, but only endeavour, in pleading for what we apprehend to be the faith once delivered to the saints, to speak the truth in love.

This, therefore, I shall now attempt: And as original sin consists of two parts, that which is imputed to us, and that which is inherent in us, and it is necessary we should be acquainted with both, that we may look after that twofold righteousness we have in Christ, his righteousness imputed to us, in justification, and an inherent work of righteousness wrought in us, in sanctification, I shall consider each of these a little distinctly.

The former of these is a matter of pure revelation, and therefore we must regulate all our conceptions about it by, and look for the confirmation of it only in, the scriptures. It was very agreeable to reason to suppose, that the great and holy God made man pure and upright, and placed him under a wise and equitable law for his conduct; but whence sin took its rise, and what was the origin of all that moral evil that is in the world, and that long train of miseries that attend it, was a question too puzzling for mere natural light to resolve. This we are wholly indebted to the scriptures for; and it is, I think, very clearly express'd in the words of my text.

The apostle having fully proved the doctrine of justification by faith, proceeds, in this excellent chapter, in the explication, illustration, and application of that truth. He shews us the precious benefits and privileges that flow from justification : He acquaints us with the ground and foundation of it, the death of Christ ; and that he might affect his own heart and ours with that unspeakable love of God, which provided a Saviour, and sent his only begotten Son into the world, for that purpose, he considers the character and circumstances of the persons, for whom he appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh, and laid down his life : They were not friends, and such as were able to oblige him ; but God herein commended his love, that when we were sinners, ungodly, enemies, and without strength, either to help our selves, or be serviceable to him, Christ died for us ^c. He illustrates it also from the consideration of the precious fruits of his death ^d. And then further, to shew our obligations to him, he runs a parallel between the communication of sin and death by the first, and of righteousness and life by the second Adam. This not only illustrates the great truth he is discoursing of, but tends very much to the commending the love of God,

^c Ver. 6, 7, 8.^d Ver. 9, 10, 11.

and the comforting the hearts of true believers, in shewing a correspondence between our fall and our recovery, and not only a like, but a greater power in the second Adam to make us happy, than there was in the first to make us miserable. He compares them together as two publick heads and representatives of men, and copiously enlarges upon and explains the parallel^e; and comprises the sum and substance of the whole in the verse which is my text, “As by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.”

Our present concernment lies in the former clause, which acquaints us how mankind came to be involved in sin and misery; I say, mankind; for that by “Many” here, we are to understand all Adam’s posterity, that descend from him, by ordinary generation, is universally acknowledged: But it does by no means follow from thence, that the many in the latter clause are of an equal extent and latitude; for the design of the apostle here, is not to treat of the extent of Christ’s benefit, but to shew the manner of their conveyance to those who are happily admitted to share in them, whatever their numbers be; that Christ communicates grace and righteousness to

all whom he represents, i. e. the elect, as Adam transferred sin and death on those whom he represented, which are all men : So that the great truth contained in the text, which I am to consider and improve, is this;

“ By one man's disobedience all mankind are made sinners.”

In speaking to which proposition, I shall, by divine assistance, observe the following method.

- I. I shall enquire what the one man's disobedience here intended is.
- II. I shall shew in what sense all mankind are said to be made sinners, by that one man's disobedience.
- III. I shall consider the ground of this dispensation.
- IV. I shall endeavour to vindicate the justice and equity of it.

I. Let us enquire what the one man's disobedience here intended is.

There is no doubt, but by the “ one man,” is meant the first man Adam, the father of us all : And it is, I think, plain, from the scope and diction of the apostle, in the context, that by this one man's disobedience, is meant the first sin only, that first act of disobedience, in eating the forbidden

bidden fruit; by which man first cast off the allegiance that was due to his Creator. It is the sin of that one man, as he was a common person, the federal head and representative of mankind, and while he continued such; but he ceasing to be such, upon his breach of the covenant, hence it is only that first sin, and not the sins he afterwards committed, by which the many are said to be made sinners. The ἡ παράνομι, the disobedience, here is the same with the ἡ ἀμαρτία, the sin; that is, the first sin, which, entering into the world, render'd not only Adam himself, but all mankind liable and obnoxious to death ^f. It is the same likewise with the τὸ παράπτωμα, the offence, or the fall, as the first sin of Adam is generally called, by which many are dead, by which death has obtained dominion over us, and by which judgment is come upon all men to condemnation ^g. The word is all along used in the singular number, implying, says a judicious writer ^h, that judgment does not come upon all men to condemnation for all the sins that Adam committed, but for that one offence which was the first instance of sin in this lower world. And as this seems plain, from the scope and reasoning of the apostle, so some

^f Ver. 12. ^g Ver. 15, 17, 18. ^h Mr. Ridgley's doctrine of original sin.

think it is expressly asserted by him; for what we read, “By the offence of one,” may be read, “By one offence,” δι’ ἑνὸς παραπτώματος, judgment came upon all men to condemnationⁱ, and so our margin reads it. And there is a various lection in one place; for while most copies read, τῷ τῷ ἑνὸς παραπτώματι, “By one man’s offence, death reigned by one;” which our translators follow in the text, there are some that read τῷ ἐνὶ παραπτώματι, by one offence, which Beza follows, and our translation in the margin. Now the disobedience, in my text, being the same with that one offence, or fall, mentioned before, it must be meant of that first act of disobedience, by which Adam fell from his original state of righteousness and happiness.

II. I shall enquire in what sense all mankind are said to be made sinners by that one man’s disobedience; and this, I humbly conceive, is by imputation. I grant, that we may be said to be made sinners by the first man, as we derive from him natures universally corrupted and depraved; of which, God willing, I shall speak afterwards: But I cannot help thinking, that the proper and direct intendment of the apostle here is, that we are made

ⁱ Ver. 18.

sinners by the imputation of the guilt of the first sin to us.

This, I am very sensible, is denied by many. The Pelagians and Socinians agree in saying, that Adam's sin was merely personal; that by it, indeed, as being the first sin, it is said, that sin enter'd into the world, but that his posterity were not concerned in it; nor are they liable to any punishment for it. And with these do fully agree, not only our modern Infidels, one of whom professes, that original sin was ever a difficult pill with him to swallow, his reason stopping it in his throat, and not having faith enough to wash it down^k; but many that would be accounted good Christians, and stanch churchmen: "What am I concerned, says one^l, in Adam's sin, which had never my will, or consent, more than in the sin of Mahomet, or Julius Cæsar; nay, (*horresco referens*) than in the sins of Beelzebub and Lucifer." They allow, indeed, we may be said to be made sinners by Adam, by imitation; as Jeroboam is said, by way of example, to have caused Israel to sin: But as we can no more, in this sense, be said to be made sinners, by the disobedience of the first man, than we can by the disobedience of

^k Blount's Oracles of Reason, p. 10.
Præ-existence of Souls, c. 2.

^l Glanvil of the

our immediate parents, or of any other person; so this cannot, by any considerate mind, be imagined to answer the strong expressions made use of in our context. We are there told, that by one man sin enter'd into the world, and death by sin, and therefore death hath pass'd upon all men, because all finned in him: Death reigned by one, by this one man's offence, and that over those who were incapable of imitating him; and, by this one offence, judgment is come upon all men to condemnation. These expressions are very strong, and do more than intimate, that death was not only the consequence of Adam's sin, with respect to himself, but is a misery and punishment entail'd upon all his posterity, for that first sin of his^m.

This is so manifest, that our more sober and thoughtful Arminians see a necessity of abandoning the foregoing pretence, of our being made sinners only by imitation. They plead, that we are said to have finned in Adam, and to be made sinners by his disobedience; not, indeed, by the imputation of his sin and disobedience to us, but only by becoming obnoxious to that death, which was the punishment of his

^m ————— In me all
Posterity stands curs'd! Fair patrimony,
That I must leave ye, sons!

Milton.

fin. Thus a late annotator ⁿ, of no small fame, says : “ This is the only sense in which we are said, by the disobedience of the first man, to be made sinners, namely, by being subject to the death, and temporal calamities and miseries, which came upon all mankind for Adam's sin ; so that we sinned in him, and, by his disobedience, become sinners, by a metonymy of the effect, by suffering the punishment which God had threaten'd to him for it.” Herein he follows Grotius, and produces several scripture testimonies to prove, that the Hebrew word חַטָּאת signifies both sin and punishment ; which pains might well have been spared, because as no body denies it, so it is nothing to the purpose. This, we are told, is the interpretation given of these passages by the Greek expositors, Chrysostom, Theodoret, OEcumenius, and Theophylact, and it is generally adopted by the gentlemen on the other side of the question. But besides, that it is difficult to conceive how we should become liable to the punishment, and how it is reconcileable with the justice and righteousness of God to inflict that punishment upon us, if we were no way chargeable with the guilt of that sin, since punishment always supposes guilt : I say, besides this, such an

ⁿ Whitby in Rom. v. 12.

interpretation seems to reflect absurdity upon the apostle and his reasoning; in the twelfth verse, death is said to have passed upon all, because all sinned in Adam, which is allowed, by the annotator, to be parallel with my text. Now there the apostle plainly gives a reason why the sentence of death passed upon all men; and if this be the only meaning of our being said to sin in Adam, it makes him guilty of the absurdity of proving idem per idem: The sense, according to this interpretation, must be; death has pass'd upon all men, because all men are subject to death; or death has passed upon all men, because death passes upon all men. An absurdity which so great a reasoner as the apostle Paul, abstracting the consideration of his being inspired, could never have been guilty of.

There is therefore certainly something more than this intended in the expression, and that is, that we are made sinners by having that one man's disobedience imputed to us. Not that we actually and personally committed that act of disobedience; that is impossible, since we did not then exist: And the very notion of imputation clears us from the ridiculous charge of such an absurdity; for the judicial accounting that to us, which is not inherent in us, and was not personally done by us, is what is meant by imputation; and that

we are thus made sinners by Adam's disobedience, appears both from the signification of the word here made use of, and from the scope of the apostle in this context. When we are said to be made sinners, the word *κατεσάθησαν*, properly signifies the making us such by a judicial act. We are constituted sinners, i. e. in the divine oeconomy and administration accounted as criminals. That act of disobedience is reckoned to and charged upon us, and we are dealt with as if we had actually sinned. This signification the word will very well bear; and that it is the meaning of it here, seems very plain to me, from this whole discourse of the apostle. We are so made sinners, as to be made liable to death, the punishment of sin: This has passed upon all men, because all are reckoned to have sinned in Adam°. It hath reigned, from Adam successively, in all the various generations of the world, and that even over them who had not sinned, after the similitude of Adam's transgression, or infants who die, before they come under the guilt of any actual sin: How could they be made liable to death, the punishment of sin, if they had not been judged or rec-

° *Ἡμαρτον* non tam significat peccandi actum, quam reatum ex peccato Adami acceptum, ut recte Jac. Altingius observavit, ita ut peccatum illis imputaretur, v. 13. & omnes peccatores censerentur (*ἁμαρτωλὶ κατεσάθησαν*) v. 19. Jacobi Elſner. observationes sacræ in loc.

koned to have sinned? Does not such a supposition reflect upon the justice of God, in punishing men for an act they were no way concerned in? Nay, does it not imply a contradiction, since punishment always supposes guilt? Whether God, by his sovereign power, might not have inflicted death on an innocent creature, I do not dispute; but that an innocent creature should be guilty of death, seems, to me, a contradiction; for death being the wages of sin, to be guilty of death, is some way or other to have sinned. We could not sin in our own persons before we existed; and therefore if, by the first man's disobedience, we are made guilty of death, it must be by the imputation of the guilt of that sin to us. This also seems plain, from the verse immediately preceding my text, where, by the one man's offence, judgment is said to have come upon all men to condemnation. Judgment is not in the original; but it is not material, whether we supply sin according to some, or judgment according to others; for, which ever of them is meant, it is expressly said to be *εἰς κατάκριμα*, to condemnation; "Which word, says a learned writer^p, cannot, with any manner of consistency, be taken in any other than a forensick sense,

^p Mr. Ridgley on Original Sin.

and perhaps it is never used in any other sense, in the New Testament." Now we are thus brought under condemnation by the offence of one, even Adam; and for one person to be condemned for the offence of another, must necessarily argue the imputation of that offence to him, otherwise the condemnation would not be just. If therefore all mankind are liable to judgment, or condemnation, by this one offence, although not actually committed by them, it must necessarily be placed to their account, i. e. imputed to them.

This further appears from the manifest scope of the apostle in this context, which is to illustrate the doctrine of justification, of which he had treated before, and to represent the way in which we are made partakers of the righteousness of Christ. This is the professed design of the comparison he here makes between Adam and Christ: It is as if he had said; as Adam transmits sin and death to all his natural posterity, so Christ conveys righteousness, and justification of life to all his spiritual seed. This he illustrates in the preceding verses, and gives us the sum of the whole in my text, that as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One are many made righteous. The way of conveyance in both is the same. Now how are we made righteous
by

by the obedience of Christ, but by the imputation of that obedience to us? And if so, when we are said to be made sinners by the disobedience of the first man, the antithesis requires that it should be meant of our being made sinners, by the imputation of his disobedience to us. This is so necessary a consequence from the apostle's reasoning, that the deniers of the imputation of Adam's sin, of course deny the doctrine of justification by imputed righteousness: And, perhaps, it is from the pride of men, in refusing to submit to the righteousness of Christ, and going about to establish a righteousness of their own, that they have set themselves so much to oppose the imputation of Adam's sin. This, in particular, seems to have been the case of Socinus, who confesses, that this discourse of the apostle gives great countenance to the doctrine of justification by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ^a. But not relishing that, he sets himself, with all his cunning and artifice, to oppose the imputation of the sin of Adam to his natural posterity, being very sensible, that if that is admitted, the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to his spiritual seed will unavoidable follow, from the reasoning of the apostle in

^a Socinus de Servator. Par. 4. cap. 6.

this context. But it is time to proceed :

III. I shall consider the ground of this dispensation; and this is, that Adam, in his first act of disobedience, was not only the natural root, but the federal head of all his posterity. I take it for granted that those words, containing God's prohibition, " Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die ^r," are to be considered not only as expressive of a law, strictly speaking, or a mere declaration of the will of God, as a Sovereign, but as containing in them a covenant transaction between God and Adam: It is not, indeed, stiled there a covenant; but it is usually called so by divines, and it really was so; for in the threatening of death annex'd, in case of disobedience, there was included a promise, in case of obedience, of the continuance of his then happy circumstances, and his confirmation therein, if not of a superadded happiness: This was proposed to Adam, and he agreed and consented to it, which is the formal nature of a covenant. The sum was this; that if he per-

^r Gen. ii. 16, 17.

severed in his innocency, the grace and strength he had should be continued to him, and he should live and be happy; but if he disobey'd God, he should lose the advantages he was then possessed of, and be subject to death and misery, both in this and in another state. This, I think, is sufficiently proved, by a reverend and learned writer^f, whose praise is in the churches; so that I need not enlarge upon it. Now, in this covenant, Adam was considered not as a private, but a publick person, sustaining the persons of all mankind: He was constituted the head and representative of all his posterity, and we were in him, not only feminally, but federally also: We were in him as our natural root and common parent, from whom we descend by natural generation: We were in his loins, and a part of him, when he fell, and, upon this account, his disobedience may be reckoned ours; as Levi, not born till many years after, is said to have paid tithes to Melchisedeck, because he was in the loins of Abraham^g. But the principal ground of the imputation of his sin to us is, that we were in him as our federal head and representative. If this can be proved, the doctrine we are con-

^f Mr. Ridgley of Original Sin. See also Bishop Bull's Sermon. Vol. III. Disc. 5.

^g Heb. vii. 9, 10.

firming will be established upon a firm and unshaken foundation. And we need, I think, look no further for the proof of it than our context : For why is the emphasis all along laid upon this one man, as him, by whom, and this one man's sin, as that by which we are made sinners, and subject to death and condemnation? Why were we not made sinners by Eve, who was first in the transgression, and was a root of propagation as well as Adam? Why not by the sins he committed after his fall, when he still continued to be the natural root of mankind, and we were all still seminally in him? Nay, why not by the sins of our intermediate parents? It is very difficult, if not impossible, to assign any other reason for this, but because Adam was considered as our publick covenant, head and representative, and that he himself ceased to be so, upon his breach of the covenant by his first act of disobedience. And this seems the direct intendment of the apostle ^u, where he calls Adam the figure or type of him that was to come : Some by him that was to come, understand mankind, and give us this as the sense, that all are, by Adam's disobedience, subject to death, even infants that never sinned, after the similitude of Adam's transgression, because, when he committed that act, he was the

^u Ver. 14.

type of all men that were to come, and were to succeed him, and they were all represented in his person; and so it is an express assertion of the truth we are pleading for. But it will unavoidably follow, from the common interpretation, if by him that was to come, we do, as I think we ought to, understand Christ: For in what was Adam a type of Christ? Not as he was a man certainly consisting of soul and body, since, in that respect, all who lived before Christ might as justly be called types of him as Adam; but it was in some peculiar circumstance in which he was distinguished from all others, and that is, he was the federal head and representative of his posterity. It was in this regard, that in the covenant transactions between God and him, and in the consequent event of those transactions, he was a publick person: So Christ the anti-type certainly was: He is the Head of the new covenant, and acted as a publick Person and the Representative of all that the Father had given him: He dealt with God for them, as their Head and Representative, died for them, rose for them, enter'd within the veil for them, and did all that he did for them; and in this regard was Adam his type: God dealt with him, and he acted as the federal head and representative of his posterity; so that what he did in that station,
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and under that character, we may be said to have done in him; and what was done to him, may be said to have been done to us in him. And this appears from the subsequent reasoning of the apostle, where he considers the influence of these two heads, what is convey'd by them, and the manner of conveying it to those that are respectively in them; that as Adam, the type and head of the first covenant, conveys sin and death to all that were in him naturally, so Christ, the Antitype and the Head of the new covenant, conveys righteousness and life to all that are in him spiritually; so that we need not look any farther than to this discourse of the apostle, to prove that Adam was the federal head and representative of all his posterity. But this, says a right reverend expositor^w, who represents it as an harsh and inconceivable opinion, is only a single proof; and, when we have not a variety of places, proving any point in which one gives light to another, we cannot be so sure of the meaning of any one place, as to raise a theory, or found a doctrine upon it. To which I answer; that if this was the case, and we had no other proof, this is not a just exception, because a single proof, if it is

^w Bishop Burnet's Exposition of the ninth Article of the Church of England.

valid, is and ought to be esteemed a sufficient proof. But this really is not the case, for we have other scriptures that give light to, and tend to confirm this truth ; and particularly where the apostle * compares Adam and Christ together, under the notions of the first and second man, and the first and last Adam. In what respect is Christ called the second man ? It cannot be meant in order of time and number, for so Cain, and not Christ, was the second man : It must therefore be in some respect, in which there were but two men, in which there was one, and but one, before him ; and it is very difficult to conceive in what respect this could be, unless as he was a publick Person, and Head of all his spiritual seed : And if Christ was a second publick Person, there must have been a first publick person, and that must be Adam, since no man, if not Adam, was ever the publick head of all mankind : Thus he is also called the last Adam, because typified by the first, and bearing some resemblance to him. But in what does this resemblance consist, if not in this, that as Adam was a publick person, and head of the first covenant, and as such convey'd sin and death to his natural posterity, so Christ is a publick Person, and Head of

* I Cor. xv. 45.

the new covenant, and the meritorious as well as effective principle of the resurrection, by which his spiritual seed shall have a full and compleat deliverance from all the effects of Adam's sin? for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive ^y. From all which it appears, that Adam was not only the natural root, but the federal head and representative of his natural posterity: And this is the ground and reason of the imputation of the guilt of the first sin to us, or of our being made sinners by his disobedience.

IV. It remains, that I endeavour to vindicate the justice and equity of this dispensation. And here there is a mighty outcry raised, as if we represented God dealing with mankind in a way that would be accounted very unjust and severe, in all methods of human government. A certain writer ^z, who thinks himself qualified to be an advocate for reason, as a sufficient guide in matters of religion, and insolently presumes to direct his Maker what was fit, or unfit, for him to do, has boldly pronounced such a constitution of things to be wrong, that mankind is not only unkindly, but harshly and unequally dealt

^y Ver. 22.

^z Chubb's Discourse concerning Reason, with regard to Religion and divine Revelation.

with, and insinuates that we have not fair play for our lives, for our souls. But where lies the injustice and inequality of this constitution of things? Is it that one should be punished for the sin of another? This is far from being unjust in all cases. The great God himself, who can do no wrong, but is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works, has threaten'd, in the second commandment, to visit the iniquities of fathers upon their children; and we have many instances of it recorded in scripture. Nor did the Pagans think this inconsistent with the divine perfections, as might be proved, by various testimonies, both from their philosophers and poets ^a. Nor is it reckoned unjust in human governments, as in the case of forfeitures by high treason.

If it is objected, that it is deliver'd as a standing rule of divine justice, that none should be punished but for his own sins ^b. It is answer'd, that supposing this should be granted to be the standing rule of divine justice, in ordinary cases, (for that it does not hold universally, appears from what has but now been deliver'd) yet it does not come up to the case before us, because no man is now the federal head and repre-

^a Quicquid delirant Reges, plectuntur Achivi. Hor. Epist. I. ii. 9.

^b Ezek. xviii. 20.

representative of his posterity, as Adam was. That rule holds good only in punishments inflicted for another man's crime, on those who have no manner of concern in it. But that is not the present case, since it has been proved, that by Adam's offence we are all made sinners, and that upon this ground, that we were all considered in him, and as sinning in him, as our head and representative.

But it will be said, that this ground is, indeed, the ground and foundation of the charge of injustice and inequality in this procedure; for where is the justice of Adam's being consider'd as our representative, and of our being concluded by what he did, when we never chose him, nor had he our consent to be our representative? To this it is answer'd, that to make Adam our publick representative, there was no necessity that such a relation should be confer'd upon him, by our explicit consent: It is sufficient that it was done by the righteous appointment of God, who had a sovereign authority to constitute Adam the head of all mankind. God chose him, and there is the highest reason we should acquiesce in the choice, if we consider, that God made as good a choice, as men could possibly have made

^c See Mr. R. Taylor's Sermon of the Imputation of Adam's Sin, p. 86, 87.

for themselves. Adam was not only the first man, and common father of mankind, and therefore entitled to that privilege and honour, by the law of nature, as we find the first heads of tribes frequently appearing as publick persons, instead of the rest, but he was as perfect as ever any after could have been : He had a perfection of strength to fulfil the conditions of the covenant, and, being the common father of all, had not only the law of nature, but that of love and conscience, which parents generally have to their childrens good, as much as to their own, to oblige and engage him to be faithful.

But, admitting him to be ever so well qualified for this trust, it may be said, we never consented to his transacting for us, and therefore it is hard we should be concluded by what he did. But is there any thing peculiar in this regard to this first covenant transaction with Adam? Have we not frequent instances of it in after covenant transactions? When God enter'd into covenant with Abraham and his seed, and appointed circumcision to be the seal of it, were not the seed obliged by it, although incapable of giving an actual consent to it? How else could every child that was uncircumcised be said to break that covenant? So in that covenant agreement between God and the people of Israel,

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it is said, “ Neither with you only do I make this covenant, and this oath, but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not with us here this day^d ;” that is, says Bishop Kidder^e, with your posterity ; not only with those that are now in being, but are absent, but with those that are afterwards to proceed from you, and are not yet born, and therefore are not capable of consenting to this agreement: And so it is with covenants and contracts made between man and man, at this day. How often do men oblige their children and heirs, even those that are unborn, to keep the conditions of those contracts ? And do any complain of the injustice of this procedure ? That our first father therefore should transact for us, without our consent, is so far from being unjust and unequal, that it is justified by the common sentiments and practice of mankind.

If therefore there is any injustice, it must be in the matter of the covenant he was placed under : But this cannot be, since God therein required nothing of him, but what he was obliged to, by the law of his creation, as well as what he was able to perform. The most perfect and exact

^d Deut. xxix. 14, 15.

^e Comment. in locum.

obedience was due from man to God, the author of his being, by the law of nature, and the transgression of this law of nature deserved wrath, and punishment was due to it from the justice of God. In requiring such an obedience therefore, and that under the penalty of death, there could be no injustice. But then if it is considered, that God likewise promised to reward this obedience, that was due by the law of his creation, not only with the continuance of his present happy circumstances, but a superadded felicity, which man could have no claim to, but from the free promise of God, it is so far from being an instance of severity, that it is an instance of infinite grace and condescending goodness in God. This, some will say, is true, with respect to Adam himself; but if Adam is considered in all this as a publick person and representative, it is equally true with respect to us, since, if he had stood, we had as certainly received the benefit, as, by his fall, we are involved in his guilt and ruin. Would it have been just with God to have judged us innocent in innocent Adam? And is it unjust in God to judge us guilty in guilty Adam? I shall take leave here to produce the sentiments of two very great men. The one an eminent divine^f:

^f Dr. Goodwin, Vol. III, p. 18.

“ It is an equal rule, says he, that by the same law, by virtue of which one may come to receive good freely, he should, upon the same terms, receive the contrary evil deservedly, upon offending. As Job said, Shall we receive good from God and not evil ? so may we say here, Should we have received the happy fruits of Adam's obedience if he had stood ? And should we not receive the contrary if he fell, through the guilt of his sin. If God had made the law only to have received evil upon his offending, who could have found fault ? much less when he put him into an estate, which would have proved so happy for us, if he had not offended ?” And he goes on to vindicate the justice of God, in constituting Adam our federal head and representative by the following similitude ^s : “ Suppose, says he, a king should raise up a man, out of nothing, to a great and noble condition, which he also gave him, not for his own person only, but for his seed for ever ; might he not make this covenant with him, that if he turned traitor, he should forfeit all for himself, and his posterity likewise be made slaves ? And would not this law justly take hold of them, though they were not then born ? Yes, God will justify his pro-

^s Ibidem.

ceedings by this course in the world, generally in all kingdoms; which shews, that it is the law of nature, and that there is a justice in it; for the law makes the blood of a nobleman, guilty of treason, tainted till restored." The other is an eminent lawyerⁿ, who was well skill'd in the nature of laws and penalties, and the reasons of them: "God made man righteous at first, says he, and gave him a righteous law; and, inasmuch as man owed an infinite subjection to the Author of his being, he owed an exact obedience to this law of his Maker: Yet God was pleased to give him this law, not only as the rule of his obedience, but as a covenant of life and death, wherein the first man made a stipulation for himself and his posterity: And this was just; for he had in himself the race of all mankind. All succeeding generations are but pieces of Adam, who had not, nor could have, their being but from him, and so it was but reasonable and just for him to contract for all his posterity: And as it was just, in respect of the person contracting, so it was in respect of the manner of the contract. The law, which was his covenant, was a just and righteous law, a law suitable to the endowments and power of his

ⁿ Lord Chief Justice Hale's Meditation upon the Lord's Prayer.

nature. Again, the blessedness, which by his obedience, he was to hold, was not of his own creating or obtaining : It was the free gift of God, and it is but reasonable that the Lord of this gift might give it in what manner he pleased: And it could not be unjust, that the Lord, who gave him this blessedness, should give it him under what conditions he pleased ; but he gave it him under most reasonable and just conditions, viz. an obedience to a most just and reasonable law, which suited with the ability and perfection of his nature. And therefore when, upon the breach of covenant by man, he withdrew that blessedness from him and his posterity, he did no more than what was most just for him to do. And thus we stand guilty of that sin, which our first father committed, and are deprived of that blessedness and life, which our first father had, and the privation of that blessedness and immortality is death." Thus admirably does that very great man clear the justice of God in this affair, and lets us see that it is exactly conformable to the laws of reason and equity. I will only add, that if this course yet seems severe, let it be considered, that God has been pleased, out of his abundant goodness, to establish the same rule and method for our salvation and recovery. My text tells us, that " as by one man's disobedience many
were

were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." God has ordained Christ in our nature to be a second Adam: He is all along, in this discourse, considered by the apostle as a publick person, and federal head and representative, as the first Adam was: He sustains the persons of all that were given to him by the father; and God is graciously pleased to reckon what was done by him as done by them, as he looks upon what was done by Adam as done by us; and life and righteousness are convey'd from the one to all true believers his spiritual seed, as sin and death are convey'd from the other, to all his natural posterity. So that here is no just ground of complaint, since there is a sufficient compensation made by Christ for what we lost in Adam, and the mighty benefit redounds to us, in the same way too, that Adam's sin does; for as this is imputed to us to condemnation, so is the righteousness of Christ to justification of life.

THE APPLICATION.

From the whole we may observe, that the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin is no novel doctrine, but a part of primitive Christianity. It was, indeed, acknowledged by the Jews, as the learned

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Buxtorfⁱ has proved, by several testimonies out of their writers, and as Bishop Burnet, in his Exposition of the ninth Article, allows there is good reason to believe, although he reckons it one of the odd things found amongst the Cabbalists. But it is plain, from this discourse of the apostle, that it was an article of primitive Christianity: And that it was the sentiment of the primitive church, may be proved, not only by citations^k from particular fathers, but the concurrent testimony of an African Synod, held in the year 254, and in which were present threescore and six Bishops. A question was proposed to them concerning the time of the baptism of infants, Whether it might be done before the eighth day after their birth, according to the law of circumcision? The Synod decreed that it might, and, amongst their reasons, they

ⁱ Dissert. de Ling. Hebr. Confus.

^k I shall only give a remarkable testimony of Chrysostom: *Ὅπου ἀριστάται τὸ ἐνὸς ἑνὶ ὅταν λέγῃ σοι ὁ Ἰουδαίος, Πῶς, ἐνὸς κατορθώσαντος τὸ Χριστὸν ἢ οὐκ ἐκ μὲν ἐσώθη; δυνήθης αὐτῷ λέγειν, Πῶς, ἐνὸς παρὰ κείνου τὸ Ἀδὰμ ἢ οὐκ ἐκ μὲν κατεκείνη. The reason of the apostle's saying so often [by One] is, that when a Jew shall ask, How the world should be saved by the well-doing of One (the righteousness of Christ?) Thou mightest be able to say to him, How should the world be condemned by one Adam's sinning. By which words (says Dr. Hammond, on Psal. li. 5.) it appears that this doctrine of the whole world's being under condemnation for the sin of Adam, was such as he thought no Jew would doubt of, for else it could be no fit means to silence his objection against the redemption of the world by Christ.*

have

have these words to our purpose ^m: “ An infant is not to be prohibited from this grace, who, being but just born, is guilty of no sin, but of original, which he contracted from Adam, who ought the more readily to be received to the remission of sins, because not his own but another’s sins are remitted to him.” And this, to be sure, is the good old Protestant doctrine, which, at the Reformation, was rescued from that darkness and corruption, under which it lay obscured in the times of Popery. And this, many think, is what the Church of England means when, in her ninth Article, she asserts original sin to deserve God’s wrath and damnation. Let us therefore endeavour to confirm our faith in, and hold fast this doctrine, and not suffer our selves to be moved from it, by the slight and cunning craftiness of any who lie in wait to deceive. Let us learn, from hence, to be deeply humbled before God, for that first act of disobedience, which has involved us all in guilt and ruin. Since we are all by that act made sinners, we must all

¹ Prohiberi non debet infans, qui recens natus nihil peccavit, nisi quod secundum Adam carnaliter natus contagium mortis antiquæ prima natiuitate contraxit. Qui ad remissionem peccatorum accipiendam hoc ipse facilius accedit, quod illi remittuntur non propria sed aliena peccata. Enquiry into the Constitution, &c. of the Primitive Church, &c. Part II. p. 52.

necessarily be children of wrath by nature ; and therefore let us not dare to murmur and repine against God, but acknowledge the righteousness of that sentence, which has passed upon us, and justify God under all the evils and afflictions we are exposed to, or exercised with. Abstracting the consideration of the corruption of our natures, and our manifold actual transgressions, there is enough in that first sin, and our concernment in it, to vindicate the equity of the divine proceedings, in the greatest afflictive evils that befall us here : Hereby all the world is justly become guilty before God, and that is reason sufficient why every mouth should be stopped. Let this then fill our souls with an holy admiration of and thankfulness for the wisdom and grace of God, in providing a second Adam, by whose obedience we may be made righteous, as by Adam's disobedience we were made sinners. And as what has been said shews us our need of Christ, so it should make us fervent in praying to God, for the blessed Spirit, to reveal Christ to us, and work in us that faith, by which we may be united to him, that, being found in him, we may not only be acquitted from the guilt of the first man's disobedience, but may be brought, through the abundance of his grace, and the gift
of

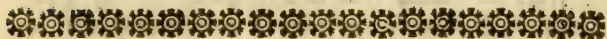
of righteousness, to reign in life, by one
Jesus Christ our Lord;

To whom be glory and dominion, for
ever and ever. Amen.





S E R M O N II.



P S A L M li. 5.

*Behold I was shaped in iniquity,
and in sin my mother con-
ceived me.*



THE knowledge of our fall in Adam, and the dreadful consequences of it, and of our recovery by Christ, are the two great hinges, whereon the whole structure of the Christian religion moves, and which go linked together, as it were, hand in hand. As the former cannot be thoroughly understood without taking a survey of the latter, so the latter cannot be laid hold on without

without a sound knowledge of the former ^a. It is therefore of very great importance and concern to us, both to be established in the belief of the doctrine, and to acquaint our selves with the nature of original sin: And as the province assigned me is to be assisting herein, I proposed to consider the two parts of original sin, that which is imputed to us, and that which is inherent in us, a little distinctly. The former of these was the subject of my preceding discourse, where I endeavoured to prove, that the first man's disobedience is imputed to us, and to vindicate the justice and equity of it. And I am now to consider the other part of original sin, namely, the corruption of nature which is derived to us from him. And, that I may render the words that have been read subservient to this purpose, I shall, through divine assistance, enquire into the true meaning of them; and then endeavour to open and vindicate the great truth contained in them.

This is one of David's penitential Psalms, and the occasion of it was his sin with Bathsheba, as we may see in the title, "To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David," when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

^a See Boehm of Original Sin.

The story we have at large recorded in his history ^b. It was a very heinous and complicated wickedness, of which he had been guilty, adultery and murder, and yet he is supposed to have continued in it, for a considerable time, without any expressions of remorse, or sorrow for it, till God sent Nathan to convince him of, and reprove him for it: But his conscience being, by this means, awakened, he became truly humbled, and, as a testimony of his unfeigned repentance and sorrow for what he had done, composed this penitential hymn, wherein he is very earnest in praying to God for pardon and mercy, and justifies God, and takes shame to himself, by a free and open confession of his sin. He not only penitently acknowledged the particular crime he had committed, with the aggravations of it, and thereby justifies God in the sentence past upon him ^c: But he follows the streams up to the spring head, and laments his original sin, and natural corruption, in the words of my text; "Behold, I was shaped in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me." It is as if he had said, "This is not the only sin, which I have reason to acknowledge and bewail before thee; for this filthy stream leads me to a corrupt fountain: This heinous crime, although

^b 2 Sam. xi. 12.^c Ver. 3, 4.

drawn out by external temptation, was, indeed, the proper fruit of my own vile nature, which, without the restraints of thy providence or grace, will incline and dispose me to commit these and ten thousand other sins, as occasions offer themselves: Not that I mention this in excuse of what I have done; no, this innate proneness to evil ought, and, if I had duly considered it, would have made me more watchful against the temptation, and more diligent to suppress those bad inclinations, which I knew to be so natural, that I brought them into the world with me ^d. I confess it therefore as an aggravation of my sin and folly, in dallying with the temptation, and venturing amongst the sparks with such tinder in my heart, and desire to humble my self before thee for it, and implore thy pardon and mercy." So that it is his natural corruption, which is commonly called original sin, because it is as ancient as our original, and because it is the original of all our actual transgressions, that he here confesses and bewails. This is excepted against by some: The learned Grotius thinks there is an hyperbole in the words, and gives us this as the sense: Non nunc tantum, not now only, but I have often sinned, a pueritia mea, from my childhood; as if he only

^d Bishop Patrick's Paraphrase,

took occasion, from this great crime, to confess his other former actual transgressions. But the expressions are too strong to admit this gloss, nor should we relinquish the literal sense of words in scripture, and have recourse to figures, without a plain necessity, whereas none can be pretended here, unless it be to serve an hypothesis. The Pelagians and Socinians endeavour to evade the force of this text, and the argument contained in it, for the proof of the corruption of nature, by pretending that David here only confessed his parents sinfulness, in begetting and conceiving him, and not his own natural sinfulness, as begotten and conceived: But this is a very forced interpretation; for the word ^e, which we render, "I was shaped," and which respects not his parents act in begetting, but, if we carry it so far, his formation in the womb, wherein they, as well as himself, were passive, and not actors, will not bear this meaning. This sense is also inconsistent with his design, which is not to accuse others, but to confess his own sin, and implore pardon and mercy for it; and what an odd plea would this put into the mouth of such a penitent? Although I did not derive sin from my parents, yet they

finned in begetting me, therefore pardon my sin. Besides all this, there is, in truth, no foundation for this interpretation in the nature of things. The scriptures give us no hint of any sin of this kind that David's parents were chargeable with. On the other hand, we find him mentioning the piety of his mother, that she was God's handmaid, and pleading his relation to her as such^f. It is therefore his own sin, and not the sin of his parents that he here confesses, and it is the sin of his nature, and that which was derived to him by natural generation; "I was shaped in iniquity, and conceived in sin," i. e. from my birth, from my formation in the womb, when my nature was first convey'd to me, and I was constituted a man: As soon as my soul and body were united in the womb (for in that latitude we may understand these phrases of his being shaped and conceived) I was a sinner, having not only the guilt of Adam's first sin imputed to me, but having from him a defiled, polluted, corrupted nature derived to me. And thus the general current of interpreters, both Jewish and Christian, both ancient and modern, understand and expound it: And this being the true meaning of the words, I might observe from them several

^f Psal. lxxxvi, 16. cxvi. 16.

things useful for instruction; as, that the corruption of our nature is a sin, that it is the corrupt fountain from whence all actual transgressions flow, that in the confession of our actual sins, we should be led by these streams to acknowledge and bewail this corrupt fountain of them, and the like.

What I shall at present attempt, is only to illustrate and vindicate this general truth; that all mankind, descending from Adam, by ordinary generation, are born in sin, and original corruption.

I say descending from Adam by ordinary generation, to except our blessed Saviour, who was born by a supernatural and miraculous conception. But he being excepted, what David here acknowledges concerning himself is true of all mankind besides.

- I. I shall briefly shew what we mean by this original corruption.
- II. I shall prove that we are all tainted with it, and that from our birth and formation.
- III. I shall enquire whence it is that we are so, and what is the reason and cause of it.

I. I am briefly to shew what we mean by this original corruption; and, in general,

ral, it is a universal depravation of every part in man since the fall. The scripture assures us, that God made man upright ^g, and after his own image ^h. There was an habitual conformity of all his natural powers to the whole will of God: His understanding saw divine things clearly and truly, without error or mistake: His will complied readily and universally with the will of God, without reluctance or resistance: His affections were all orderly: He had no unruly appetites or passions, nor was there any vanity or ungovernableness in his thoughts: All the inferior powers were subject to the dictates and direction of the superior, without any mutiny or rebellion. Thus was man made upright, after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. But this uprightness and integrity is now lost, the whole soul and body corrupted, and the whole harmony of man dissolved. The image of God is razed out or obliterated, and the image of the devil himself engraved upon the soul, all men, and all in man, being quite out of order. The soul is corrupted with all its faculties; the mind with darkness and ignorance ⁱ, being subject to the sensitive part, and strongly prejudiced

^g Eccles. vii. 29.
v. 8₂

^h Gen. i. 26, 27;

ⁱ Eph.

against the things of God ^k; the conscience with stupidity and insensibleness ^l; the will with stubbornness and rebellion ^m; the affections are become carnal, and placed either upon unlawful objects, or upon lawful in an unlawful manner or degree ⁿ; the thoughts and imaginations are full of pride, and vanity, and disorder ^o: And as for the body, that is become a clog, instead of being serviceable to the soul, and all its members and senses instruments of unrighteousness to sin ^p: It is, I say, in general, a universal depravation of every part in man since the fall; and more particularly it consists in a privation of all good, in an enmity to God and the things of God, and in a propensity to all evil. It consists in a privation of all that is good: By the first act of sin there was a loss of original purity and righteousness; the image of God, wherein man was created, was defaced, and blotted out, and, wherever this corruption is predominant, there is a total absence of all that is holy and good. The apostle is very express to this purpose; “ I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, (or in my nature, as corrupted, which is frequently signified by the term flesh in scripture) there dwelleth no

^k 1 Cor. iv. 24.
ⁿ Col. iii. 2.

^l Tit. i. 15.
^o Gen. vi. 5.

^m Rom. viii. 7.
^p Rom. vi. 19.

good thing^a;" no grace, no holiness, nothing that is truly and spiritually good. We may as soon expect to find good corn growing upon a rock, or on the sand by the sea-side, as expect any good from corrupt nature as such. The new nature cannot commit sin, but the flesh, the old corrupt nature, can do nothing but sin, for it serves and is entirely under the conduct and government of the law of sin^r; nor is there a bare absence of what is good, but an enmity against it: In fallen man there is not only a weakness and impotence to what is good, whence we are said to be without strength, and not sufficient of our selves to do a good action, to speak a good word, or so much as to think a good thought, but there is besides an averseness to, and enmity against it. We are therefore said to be enemies in our minds, nay, to be enmity in the abstract; "The carnal mind (the mind as overspread with natural corruption) is enmity against God^t." It is an enmity that is deeply rooted: The mind, the will, and all the powers of the soul are possessed by it. The best of the flesh, even the wisdom of the flesh, *φρόνημα σαρκός*, is enmity against God; and it extends it self to all of God, his nature, his properties, his image, his will, his law,

^a Rom. vii. 18.^r Ver. 25.^t Chap. viii. 7.

his gospel : There is in it a perfect contrariety to the nature, and it does always cross and resist the will of God ; so that it is not and cannot be subject to his laws. This is the unhappy, the wretched temper of thy soul, O sinner, of every soul by nature, until it is renewed by grace : It is full of hatred and enmity against him who is the Author of our being, and the Fountain of our happiness, and herein it evidences it self so to be, that it is not subject to his law, neither, indeed, can be. Farther, it consists in a propensity to all that is evil ; not that there is an equal propensity in all to every sin, for some are more inclined to some sins, and some to others[†] ; but there is a propensity, more or less, in every one to all sin : All sin whatever is wrapt up in this natural corruption, as one expresses it[‡], and actual sins are but the unfoldings of it, they all proceeding from this corrupt root and fountain^{*}. It is for this reason, as some conceive, that the Septuagint render sin and iniquity in the text in the plural number[‡], because there is a plurality of sins in our natural corruption. It is all sin, virtually, because it disposes and inclines to all ; and consequently if

[†] Unicuique dedit vitium natura creato. Prop. I. xviii. 17.

[‡] Mr. Clarkson of Original Sin.

^{*} Matt. xv. 29.

[‡] ἐν ἀπορίαις, ἐν ἐμαρτίαις.

there is any particular sin we have not fallen into, it is not for want of corrupt principles and dispositions in our nature, but it is owing to the restraints of the providence or grace of God, without which we should break out into as great abominations, as were ever committed by the vilest of the sons of men. This being what we mean by original corruption,

II. I shall prove that we are all tainted with it, and that from our very birth and formation. That this corruption is general, and has overspread our whole race, the history and experience of all ages teach us but too evidently. The immediate son of the first transgressor proceeded to such a degree of envy and malice, that he murder'd his own brother, more righteous than himself: And from thence impiety spread and prevailed in the old world, till divine patience, no longer able to bear, gave way to justice, which brought in the deluge, and swept mankind, one family only excepted, from off the face of the earth. But, notwithstanding so vast and so astonishing a desolation, this corruption soon shew'd it self again, in the new world, and that in a religious family too: They had seen a wonderful train of mercies, leading them through a sea of judgments, but nothing of that was able to extirpate

an evil so deeply rooted in human nature : And sin still grew with the increase of mankind, till it brought down the fiery vengeance of the Almighty on Sodom, and the neighbouring cities. Notwithstanding those signal and fearful judgments, that in all ages have pursued sin, we find the hearts of men set in them to do evil : This disease is epidemical. Every man feels in himself a natural antipathy to good, and proneness to evil, and cannot but observe the effects of it in others. Even the wiser Pagans ^z, who wanted the light of divine revelation, were sensible, and complained, although they were ignorant of the true cause and spring of it, and therefore prescribed various ways and methods for the purifying of souls, and raising them to that purity and perfection to which they supposed they were designed.

It is certain, that, in scripture, this general corruption is often mention'd; " God made man upright, but he sought out many inventions ^a:" " The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ^b:" It tells us, that " the imaginations of mens thoughts are only evil continually ^c." And lest we should think this description only

^z ———— Dociles imitandis

Turpibus ac pravis omnes sumus. *Juv. Sat. xiv. 40.*

^a *Eccles. vii. 20.*

^b *Jer. xvii. 9.*

^c *Gen. vi. 5.*

belonged

belonged to the antediluvian finners, who had filled the earth with violence, the Lord repeats it again after the flood, “The imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth ^d.” It informs us that there is no man that lives and sins not; that there is none good, no, not one; that in us, that is, in our flesh, there dwells no good thing, and that they who are in the flesh cannot please God; where, by flesh, is meant the natural state of mankind, according to those words of our Saviour; “That which is born of the flesh is flesh ^e.” This, some think, is particularly meant by the sin of the world, which Christ, the Lamb of God, came to take away, it having overspread the whole world; but to be sure it is what is intended by the sin that dwells in us, by the law in our members, which wars against the law of our minds, by the flesh that lusts against the Spirit, and by the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. These, with many other places of scripture, to the same purpose, when they are joined to the universal experience of all mankind, are sufficient to settle this point, that, in fact, this corruption is derived to our whole race, and the contagion is spread over all. And, indeed, if it was not thus,

^d Gen. viii. 21.

^e John iii. 6.

what need had there been of a Saviour, and what necessity of regeneration? When we are told, that Christ is made to us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption ^f, may we not justly infer, that we have no wisdom, no righteousness, no sanctification of our own, and that we are not in a capacity to redeem our selves from the slavery of sin? And when our Saviour says, “ Except a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God ^g;” and adds this as the reason of it, that “ what is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit;” as it shews the absolute necessity of our being born again, so it is an undeniable proof of original corruption; for unless we were corrupted in our first, there would be no need of a second, a new birth.

But this is not all, for we are not only all infected with this sin, but my text informs us, that we are tainted with it from our very birth and formation; “ I was shaped in iniquity, and conceived in sin ^h.” I was a sinner as soon as I was a creature, as soon as I was formed, not only from my birth, and being brought forth, as

^f 1 Cor. i. 30. ^g John iii. 3, 6.

^h Omnes homines sub peccato nascimur quorum ipse ortus in vitio est, dicente David, ecce in iniquitate, &c. St. Ambrosius, de Pœnit. Lib. I. c. 11.

the first word ⁱ is render'd in other places ^k, but from my being warmed, as the other word ^l signifies, and is render'd in the margin, as soon as I was enlivened in the womb, and my soul was united to my body. This corruption is not contracted only by imitation, nor does it become habitual by custom, or repetition of acts, but it is rooted in the soul, and diffused through it, as soon as the soul is united to the body, and it discovers it self as soon as it is capable either of imitation or acting. God himself testifies not only that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth ^m, but that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart, the first that arises in him is evil, only evil, and continually evil ⁿ. Thus we are told, that man is born not only a vain empty creature, that has nothing in him, but a foolish, stupid, wilful, ungovernable creature, a wild ass's colt, as averse to all that is good and holy, as he is ignorant of all spiritual things ^o. To the same purpose the Psalmist informs us, that the wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies ^p. They brought with them into the world natures estranged from

ⁱ חללתי

24, 25.

vi. 5.

^l חמתי

^o Job ix. 12.

^k Job xv. 7. & xxxix. 1. Prov. viii.

^m Gen. viii. 21.

ⁿ Chap.

^p Psal. lviii. 3.

God, alienated from the divine life and all goodness, and no wonder then they go astray from God and their duty as soon as they are capable of acting. The foolishness bound up in their hearts presently appears, with the first operations of reason, and they speak lyes as soon as they are able to speak at all. And thus what the prophet upbraids Israel with, is applicable to particular persons; "They were called transgressors from the womb^a." The words are spoke of them politically consider'd; they were prone to idolatry from their first formation into a people, and brought with them out of Egypt a strange addictedness to that sin; but they hold true of every one of us. We may all be called transgressors from the womb, being born children of disobedience^r; yea, not only from the time of our coming out of the womb, but of our being formed in it^r. When we first have the nature of men communicated to us, then we may be called transgressors; that which conveys our nature, and constitutes us men, conveying sin, and constituting us sinners. And this may be in part the meaning of the apostle, when he tells

^a Isai. xlviii. 18.

^r — Vitiis nemo sine nascitur; optimus ille

Qui minimis urgetur — Hor. Sat. I. iii. 68.

^r Antequam nascimur, maculamur. Ambros. Apol. Dav. cap. 11.

us that we are by nature children of wrath.” “We (says he, we Jews as well as you Gentiles, which terms then comprehended all mankind) are children of wrath,” and this not by custom and imitation, but by nature; and one man is as much so by nature as another. We are not only really and truly so, which those who deny original corruption pretend is all that is meant by *φύσει*, by nature, but we are born so. As soon as we began to exist, we were children of wrath, and liable to the displeasure of the most High, having not only the guilt of the first sin righteously imputed to us, but being naturally inclined to what is sinful and vicious, and polluted and defiled with it, even from our birth. So plentiful an evidence does the scripture give of this truth, that all mankind are tainted with original corruption, and that from their very birth and formation. But,

III. I shall enquire whence this is, and what is the reason and cause of it. The general answer to this enquiry is, that Adam, having, by his rebellion, lost his primitive rectitude, and contracted a universal corruption, it is from him derived to all his natural posterity. That this was really the case with Adam himself, I might take for

¹ Eph. ii. 3.

granted, as generally acknowledged, was it not for a bold stroke of a certain writer, in favour of infidelity^u; who, pleading for reason, as a sufficient guide in matters of religion, asserts, that Adam's discerning faculty was so far from being weakened and impaired, that it is represented as being rather improved by his transgression; and this because it is said, "The eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil^w." But that this is not meant of any advances in true knowledge, is agreed by the general current of interpreters. Their eyes were opened, or their consciences were awakened and convinced, and they knew that they were naked, or stript, deprived of all the honours and joys of their innocent state, and exposed to all the miseries that might justly be expected from an angry God. Or if by their being naked is meant their being without cloaths, as indeed seems by their making themselves coverings, their knowing this must intend, not that they were ignorant of it before, but that they found themselves under a neces-

^u Chubb's Discourse concerning Reason, with regard to Religion and divine Revelation, p. 8.

^w Gen. iii. 7, 22.

sity of being cloathed, which they did not discover till now, as a learned man * explains it, who makes it an evidence and effect of the corruption of their natures; and it is plain, from the sacred history, that it was such a knowledge of their nakedness, as fill'd them with shame and fearful apprehensions of the anger of God; “ I was afraid, said the man, because I was naked, and I hid my self^y;” and hereby they came to know experimentally the good they had lost, and the evil they had done and subjected themselves to. They found such an alteration in themselves; they saw such uncomely motions and disorders in their bodies, and felt such disorder in their spirits, a law in their members warring against the law of their minds, as they had never been conscious of before, and such as filled them with shame and fear; and consequently this was a proof that their natures were corrupted and depraved. This being certain, and we being in him, both as our natural and moral principle, we, by propagation from him, derive a corrupted depraved nature, full of impotency, rebellion and disorder, and this as soon as we become the children of Adam, as soon as our souls are united to our bodies, for it is this union

* Dr. Thomas Burnet's *Demonstration of true Religion*, Vol. II. p. 52, 53.

^y Gen. iii. 10.

which

which constitutes us the children of Adam. In him the fountain was poisoned, and all the streams partake of the infection. Hence it is said, that “Adam begat a Son, in his own likeness, after his image².” Adam was made in the image of God, but having, by his sin, lost the divine image, he begat a son, not in that, but in his own likeness, sinful, and defiled like himself; not only a man like himself, consisting of soul and body, but a sinner like himself, guilty and obnoxious, degenerate and corrupt: He propagated, and convey’d to his descendants that guilt and corruption he had himself contracted¹. This Job was not unacquainted with, as appears from that question of his^b, “What is man that he should be clean, and he which is born of a woman that he should be righteous?” Or if any suppose that uncleanness is here charged upon man comparatively only, and with respect to the transcendent purity of God, which is a very different thing from the uncleanness derived from the fall, there is another passage that will not ad-

² Gen. v. 3.

^a It is remarkable that the text doth not here speak of Abel, who died without issue; nor of Cain, all whose progeny was drowned in the flood; but of Seth, by whom all mankind hath hitherto been continued in the world: which shews that none are exempted from it. Polhil’s *Speculum Theologiæ in Christo*, p. 217, 218.

^b Job xv. 14.

mit of this construction^c, where, having represented the miserable condition of man, “ Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble,” &c. He expostulates the case with God, “ Dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest thou me into judgment with thee? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?” q. d. Wilt thou be extream to mark all my errors? Is purity to be expected in a man born of a woman, who is, by the very constitution of his birth, unclean? This is an evidence, says an ingenious author^d, that this ancient writer was sensible of the evil consequences of the fall, upon the whole race of man, and that we are all corrupt by descent and inheritance. All this is, I think, plain from scripture: And this being certain if we can’t account for the modus or manner of conveying original corruption, this should by no means weaken our belief of the thing it self. How it is convey’d, is one of the most difficult questions in the whole scheme of divinity: But no man has reason to deny matter of fact, merely because he cannot conceive how it is. It is very difficult to account for the manner of the fœtus, or

^c Job xiv. 1, &c.

^d Bishop Sherlock, in his Dissertation of the sense of the Antients before Christ, upon the Circumstances and Consequences of the Fall, p. 254.

child in the womb's receiving impressions, from the imagination of its mother, or for the nurse's conveying with her milk the taint of her particular inclinations and humours, dispositions and manners, but will any be so unreasonable as to deny that this often happens? There is an infinity of things in the world of nature which are obvious to our senses, that we can no more account for the *modus* of, than we can of this. Having therefore proved the thing it self, we need not be over solicitous about, nor over nice in enquiring into the manner of it. Thus much is certain, that it is the universal and unchangeable law of nature, that every thing produces its like, not only in regard of the same nature, that is propagated from one individual to another, without a change of the species, but in respect of the qualities with which that nature is eminently affected. This is visible in the several kinds of creatures in the world: They all preserve the nature of the principle from whence they are derived, and retain the vein of their original, and the quality of their extraction^c; "Whatsoever is born of the flesh

^c —*Patrum in natos abeunt cum femine mores.* Ovid.

Do we not every day see a great resemblance between children and their parents, not only in the lineaments of their face, the motions and gestures of their body, but in the

flesh is flesh." It may be said, True, Adam being defiled, all emanations from him must partake of that viciated state to which he had brought himself. But the great difficulty is how the souls of his posterity, which are created immediately by God, come to be defiled: If they were as well as their bodies by tradition or generation from their parents, it might be less difficult to account for it; for which reason Tertullian, and divers of the Western fathers, fell in with that notion: But it is now generally exploded, and it is most agreeable, both to scripture and reason, to assert them to be immediately created by God. But how then come they to be defiled? To be sure, God does not inspire or infuse any impurity into them: This would make God the author of sin, a thought so impious and so dishonourable to God, that a pious mind cannot but reject it with the utmost abhorrence and detestation. This therefore cannot be admitted: But does it follow from thence that they are created morally pure? Where is the inconvenience?

the most signal and reigning qualities of their minds? The pride and forwardness, humility and meekness, coverousness and ambition; and even the nicer particularities of mens very humours, are oftentimes seen in those children who lost their parents before they were capable of imitation; and therefore were derived down from them by an unseen means as their original corruption. Dr. Delaune's Sermon of Original Sin, p. 22.

Is there any thing inconsistent with the divine perfections, to suppose them to receive neither purity nor impurity from him, but only their naked essence, and the natural powers and properties flowing therefrom? As a holy God, he cannot infuse into them any impurity; but, as a just and righteous God, he may withhold, and create them void of that original rectitude, holiness and righteousness, which was the happiness and glory of Adam, in his primitive state, but which by his sin he lost. Nor is there any injustice in it, since Adam was considered as our covenant, as well as natural head and representative, and consequently forfeited this for us, as well as for himself. A reverend brother, on this argument, says, "God might create a soul guilty, without any impeachment of his perfections, or giving the least ground to suppose him the author of sin; for this is a punishment due to us, for the sin of our first parents. I can also conceive, says he, how God can create a soul impotent to what is good, without any impeachment of his perfections, if we consider the privilege now denied, as having been once given, and then forfeited." But then the question still recurs, How comes it then to be defiled? Some think it

[Mr. Ridgley's *Doctrine of Original Sin*, p. 50.

is the necessary consequence of its being created guilty, and deprived of original rectitude; for whatsoever wants original rectitude, say they, naturally inclines to that which is evil. But, this want of original righteousness being supposed, the generality of divines reckon it results from the union of the soul with the body. They say, original sin does not follow either part singly; it comes in neither by the soul alone, nor by the body alone, apart from the soul, but upon the union and conjunction of these. It is the union of these two which constitutes a child of Adam, and as such only we are capable of being infected with his sin^s. But here it is objected, How can this be, since the body, being matter, cannot act upon a spirit? But this, as one observes^h, is *gratis dictum*, more easily said than proved: Cannot the body act upon or influence the soul? How then comes it to pass that so many souls become foolish, forgetful and injudicious, by their union with ill-disposed bodies? Nothing is more sensibly plain and evident, than that there is a reciprocal communication betwixt the soul and body, and that the body does as really, though we know not how, affect the soul with

^s Mr. Flavel's Treatise of the Soul of Man, Fol. 1. p. 504.
^h *Ibidem*.

its dispositions, as the soul influences it with life and motion ⁱ. There are therefore these things to be consider'd here, that the soul is created guilty, and, as the punishment of the first sin, destitute of original righteousness, and having thereby lost its guard and strength to resist, it is easily overcome by that corrupt and disorder'd matter, to which it is united. But does not this seem an unjust cruelty, to condemn souls, not impure, to such a union to a defiled body as should certainly corrupt them? To which it is answer'd ^k, That God has settled it as a law in the creation, that a soul should inform a body according to the texture of it, and either conquer it, or be master'd by it, according as it should be differently made; and that when all things were duly prepared for the propagation of the species of mankind, a soul should be always ready to enter into, and animate those first threads and beginnings of life. These laws being laid down, Adam, by corrupting his own frame, corrupted the frame of his whole posterity, by the general course of things, and the great law of his creation; so that the suffering this to run through all the race, is no more (only different in degrees and ex-

ⁱ See Turret. *Loc. de Peccato*, p. 709.
Butnet's Exposition, Art. IX. p. 111.

^k See Bishop

tent) than the suffering the folly or madness of a man to infect his posterity. In these things God acts as the Creator and Governor of the world, by general rules, and these must not be alter'd by the sins and disorders of men, but they are rather to have their course, that so sin may be its own punishment. And thus have I endeavoured to open and vindicate this general truth, that all mankind, descending from Adam by ordinary generation, are born in sin and original corruption.

THE APPLICATION.

1. From what has been said, the doctrine of original sin and corruption appears to be no new doctrine. It was not invented by St. Augustine ; no, it is much older than he, even as ancient as the fall, and has been acknowledged and lamented by the wisest and best of men in all ages. It is a doctrine attested not only by scripture, but universal experience ; and therefore let us not be ashamed to profess it, nor shy of owning it. Let us hold fast the belief of it, and not suffer our selves to be moved from it, by the sophistry and cavils, and cunning arts of crafty seducers, or by any objections that may be raised against it, from the difficulties attending the modus of its conveyance. Nothing
more

more offends carnal reason, and it is therefore no wonder that it meets with the most virulent opposition from the admirers and adorers of that idol. What? though we cannot solve all the difficulties attending it, must we not therefore believe the thing it self, when it is so fully asserted in scripture, and when we both feel it in our selves, and see the effects of it in others¹? Certainly we ought. And when we consider it not only as true, but as a doctrine of very great importance, and wherein we are all greatly concerned; the more it is opposed, the more should we endeavour to confirm our belief of it, and to appear in its defence.

2. Let us not only hold fast the belief, but endeavour and pray that we may be suitably affected with this truth: We may, from what has been said, take an affecting view of our state and condition by nature:

¹ Such objections spring out of equal ignorance and pride, and borrow all their force from no wiser or modester a supposition than that of man's omniscience: Yet, as wild and extravagant a principle as it is, the extent of it reaches very far; and it serves the depraved sons of Adam against all the doctrines which they are not willing should be true. It is the sole basis on which infidelity is built, and a most proper foundation indeed for such a superstructure. Thus these men, before they are aware, confirm the truth in question, by so unreasonably opposing it; by this means discovering themselves to be very apparent monuments of the ruins of human nature. Dr. Delaune's Sermon of Original Sin, before Sir Richard Hoare, Lord Mayor, p. 21.

And as it is useful for us all, even those that are by grace delivered from it, to be looking back to it, so it is necessary for them that are under it to be fully acquainted with it : It is, at once, a state full of guilt, and a state full of corruption and defilement : We are all of us guilty before God, having the guilt of the first sin righteously imputed to us, and this renders us obnoxious to the divine displeasure ; and we are all polluted and unclean, having corrupted and defiled natures derived to us. A spiritual leprosy has overspread all our powers and faculties, and this renders us loathsome to God, and puts us in a state of separation from him. What a fearful change has sin made in us ! The soul, that was made in the image of God, is stripped of its native righteousness and holiness, and invested with contrary qualities : “ There is as great a difference, says one ^m, between the corruption of the soul in its degenerate state, and its primitive purity, as between the loathsomeness of a dead carcase, and the beauty of a living body.” Sad change indeed ! and to be lamented with tears of confusion ; How should this humble us before God, and hide pride for ever from our eyes ? How

^m Dr. Bates's Harmony of Divine Attributes, Chap. 3.

should it fill us with self-loathing and self-abhorrence, affect our souls with shame and sorrow, and cause us to repent in dust and ashes? especially when we repent of and confess our actual transgressions, we should, in the first place, confess and bewail this corrupt fountain of them: So does David in my text. This Psalm is recorded as a publick testimony to the church, and the world, of his repentance of a great sin; and, we see, he does, in a particular manner, bewail and acknowledge this. And so did the church in Isaiah's prophecyⁿ: When they humbled themselves, they not only acknowledged that their righteousness was as a menstruous filthy rag, but they chiefly complained of the uncleanness of their persons, and that with respect to their natures; "We are all as an unclean thing." I am sensible some have made it a question, Whether we ought to repent of and be humbled for our original sin? But as the practice of the church, and the penitent Psalmist, in my text, shews they made no question of it, so we might evince, from many considerations, that this is a just ground of our repentance and humiliation. I will only mention one, and that is, that this is not only a sin in it self, but the fruit-

ⁿ *Isai. lxiv. 6.*

ful parent of all other sins : That it is a misery, all grant, who acknowledge the thing it self ; but that it is also properly a sin, appears, I think, sufficiently from the apostle John's definition, who makes the formality of sin to consist in its opposition to the law °. Sin is a transgression of the law : Whatever is contrary to the law of God, and forbid in it, is a sin ; but the corruption of our nature is forbid in the law, and contrary to what God requires therein : God requires truth in the inward part ^p ; but original corruption is the want, or rather the reverse of this. We are commanded to be holy, and that not only in our actions, but in our natures, for we are commanded to be holy as God is holy ; and so the want of holiness, which is the privative part of this sin, is forbid : We are, moreover, commanded to love the Lord our God, with all our heart, and so the heart's inclination to hate God, which is the positive part of this sin, is forbid : In a word, there is in it a non-conformity to the whole law of God, and a nonconformity to is a transgression of the whole law ^q. If therefore the apostle's definition is just, the corruption of our nature is a sin ; and accordingly it is fre-

° 1 John iii. 4.

^p Psal. li. 6.

^q See Mr. Clrkson's Discourse of Repentance.

quently called so in scripture, and acknowledged and confessed as such, by the saints, both in the Old and New Testament: So it is by David in our text; and so it is by the apostle Paul, who bewail'd and aggravated it exceedingly ^r. He not only complains of it, as a misery, but he confesses and bewails it as a sin; and, lest we should think it a small peccadillo, a sin of an ordinary size, he calls it a sin exceedingly, hyperbolically, sinful. Against this it is frequently objected: It is not a sin, because it is not voluntary: But should we admit this rule, that whatever is not voluntary is not a sin, to be just, which will not hold true universally, and without limitation, even when applied to actual sins; yet natural corruption is voluntary in some respects: It is voluntary in its principle and cause: As it was voluntarily contracted by Adam, so he therein being our federal head and representative, his will was the will of us all: But this is not all, for this corruption is inherent in the will, as its subject. If Adam had derived a bodily disease only to his posterity, it might have been an involuntary evil, because the diseases of the body may be foreign to the soul: But when the corruption invades the internal faculties, it is denominated from

^r Rom. vii,

the subject wherein it is seated. What? though it does not proceed originally from any act of the will in us; yet the consent of the will accompanies it, or rather it is it self the natural byass or inclination of the will to evil, and therefore to say that it is altogether involuntary, is no less than a contradiction. However, it is, to be sure, voluntary in us, with respect to an after-consent, and in the effects of it: Who amongst us can say, We never consented to our natural corruption, were never well pleased with it, never cherished it by occasions of sin, never strengthen'd it by acts of sin, and never resisted the means whereby it should be mortified and subdued? All which are evidences of an actual consent. Now if it is a sin, we ought to repent of, and be humbled for it, for that we ought to be thus affected to and by every sin, no one will deny. And this would further appear, if I could shew that this is not only a sin in it self, but the fruitful parent of all other sins: But, having hinted at this before, I must not enlarge upon it now.

3. What has been said discovers to us our need and necessity of Christ. We have not only the guilt of the first sin imputed, but we have natures universally defiled derived to us; and as we cannot expiate our
guilt,

guilt, so neither can we, of our selves, renew and cleanse our natures. This shews us our need of Christ, as he is made of God to the believer, both righteousness and sanctification : We need him as made of God righteousness, to cover our guilt, and as made of God sanctification to renew and cleanse our natures : His blood is the blood of atonement, and it is the blood of sanctification, and we need it in both regards; and our necessity, in these respects, is indispenfible. If we come not to him for pardon and cleansing, for righteousness and sanctification, that guilt and pollution we brought with us into the world will prove our ruin. How slight thoughts forever some may entertain of it, even this exposes us to the wrath and curse of God. As God hates sin, where-ever he sees it, so he has denounced a curse against it, and consequently being shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin, this curse belongs to us, and we are children of wrath by nature : And there is no way to be delivered from it, but by Christ, by the blood and righteousness, the Spirit and grace of Christ. If therefore we desire to be freed from it, let us pray for the gift of the divine Spirit, to shew us our disease, to discover to us our remedy, and to unite us to Christ, by a living and lively faith, that we may

be found in him, washed in his blood, cloathed with his righteousness, and renewed by his Spirit and grace, that as in Adam we all died, died with respect to the guilt, and died with respect to the power of sin, so in Christ we may, in both respects, be made alive.

4. If any of us are, by the blood and righteousness of Christ, freed from the guilt of original sin, and have the corruption of our natures, in any measure, cured, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, let us always maintain in our minds a lively sense of our obligations, how much we are indebted to the love of the Father, and to the grace of the Son and Holy Spirit, and be for ever thankful for the same. Let us, in the remembrance of it, and of the wretched circumstances of guilt and pollution, from which we are by grace delivered, walk humbly with and before the Lord all our days. And as, by the corruption of our nature, we have so strong a bias to sin, let us not only watch and pray continually, that we fall not into, and that we fall not in and by temptation; but be diligent, in the use of all appointed means, with a dependance upon the grace of the Spirit, to mortify the deeds of the body, to stop up this corrupt fountain of
actual

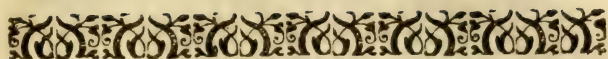
actual transgressions, and to waste sin in its root and principle.

Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three Persons, but one God, be all glory and honour, henceforth, and for evermore. Amen.



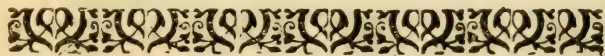
1871
The following is a list of the
names of the persons who
were present at the
meeting of the
Board of Directors
of the
City of New York
on the 1st day of
January, 1871.





THE
SCRIPTURE-DOCTRINE
OF
PARTICULAR REDEMPTION
STATED AND VINDICATED ;
IN FOUR
SERMONS.

By *JOHN HURRION*,
Minister of the Gospel.



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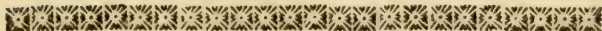
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SERMON I.



TIT. ii. 14.

Jesus Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.



HIS chapter begins with Paul's instructions to Titus, to speak the things which become sound doctrine, or to press on several ranks of persons such duties, as would adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour, which doctrine is next specified in several important branches of it ; such as the doctrine of salvation by grace, and of the

celestial glory, called the blessed hope, the doctrine of Christ's Deity, and second glorious coming to judgment, and the doctrine of our redemption by the death of Christ, with the end and design of it ^a.

This last mentioned is the subject which falls to my share in this Lecture ; which I shall the more chearfully insist upon, because I find it to be one of those important points, with respect to which the apostle gave Titus a charge to speak, and exhort, and rebuke, with all authority ^b, as if he had said, Do thou declare these doctrines, and exhort the hearers to receive them, and rebuke with all authority, or powerfully convince and reprove gainsayers, in such a manner, as none may despise thee.

The doctrine of our redemption by Christ, I take to be fully contained in the words of my text, " Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Before I come to discourse directly on this doctrine, I shall premise two things.

1. I shall consider the extent of Christ's redemption, or the persons to whom it belongs, as represented in my text.

^a Ver. 11, 13, 14.

^b Ver. 15.

2. I shall shew the weight and importance of this doctrine.

1. I am to consider the extent of this redemption, or the persons to whom it belongs, as represented in my text.

To state this right, we are to observe, that the question is not whether there is an infinite merit and worth in Christ's redeeming blood: This both parties readily allow. Nor is it a matter in debate whether many, or only a few persons are redeemed by Christ, seeing they are said, in scripture ^c, to be a great multitude, that no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. But the true state of the question is this: Whether, according to the will of the Father, and the intention of the Son, Christ died to reconcile and save all men, or a select chosen number only; the latter is what we affirm, and our opponents deny.

Let us now see how this matter is represented in my text, and which sentiment is approved and confirmed thereby. Christ gave himself to redeem us, or, by an expiatory sacrifice, to deliver us from sin and misery, and make us eternally happy. He redeemed us from the curse, being made a

curse for us ^d: He redeemed those that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons ^e. The persons redeemed are more generally specified by the word "Us;" which is a word often used, in scripture, to signify the elect and believers; as where it is said, "God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through Jesus Christ, who died for us, that we might live together with him ^f." The redeemed people are also represented, in my text, as those who, in due time, are redeemed from all iniquity, or from the guilt and power, and the very being of all sin; and also as purify'd to Christ, or really sanctified, and made holy, changed into his image, and fitted for fellowship and communion with himself. The redeemed are said to be a peculiar people; they are Christ's jewels, his treasure distinguished from others in his intention, purchase, esteem and care; they are a chosen generation, and therefore a peculiar or purchased people ^g; they are the travel of Christ's soul, the dear offspring of his blood, whom he loved, and therefore gave himself for them. The redeemed are also represented as persons zealous of good works, works of faith and love, and of repentance

^d Gal. iii. 13.
9, 10.

^e Chap. iv. 6.
^g 1 Pet. ii. 9.

^f 1 Thess. v.

and new obedience; such works as have a divine life for the principle of them, a divine direction for their rule, even the revealed will of God, and a divine attainment for the end, that is the glory of God. To be zealous of these good works, is to love them fervently, to perform them diligently, and to promote them with industry and vigour.

According to this account of the redeemed people, let us see whether we are to believe that Christ gave himself to redeem all men, or a select and peculiar number only. In my text, Christ is said to give himself for us ^h, in our room, and stead, to satisfy offended justice for all those whose iniquities were laid upon him, and for whom he died. Now did Christ stand in the stead of all men? Did he satisfy divine justice for the sins of millions, who yet suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, for the same sins themselves? Or did Christ make satisfaction for a peculiar number only, who shall never come into condemnation, but enjoy eternal life, as the purchase and fruit of his death?

When it is said that Christ gave himself, that he might redeem to himself a peculiar people, can the meaning be, that he died to render the salvation of all men possible?

ἢ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν.

Or

Or is it not rather meant, that he died to render the salvation of a select number certain and perfect? Can we suppose that Christ died to render the salvation of all men possible, when multitudes were actually in hell, and so beyond any possibility of salvation, at the very time when Christ suffer'd? The reply made to this will be consider'd and confuted hereafter. Does not the scripture speak of the effects and fruits of Christ's death, not as mere possibilities, but as things real and certain? He shall see his seed, the travel of his soulⁱ. Does not Christ say, that he laid down his life for his sheep, that they should never perish, but he would give them eternal life^k?

If Christ died to purchase to himself such as should be a purified people, zealous of good works, then surely he did not give himself to redeem all men, those who are never purify'd, as well as those that are; if he gave himself for a peculiar people, then not for all people; if for those who, in time, are made zealous of good works, then surely not for those who live and die enemies to good works, and zealous against them.

If Christ gave himself for a peculiar people, whom he valued as his jewels and

ⁱ Mat. lxxi. 10, 11.

^k John x. 28.

treasure, and who shall be his when he makes up his jewels, then he did not give himself for all men; for all men are not his jewels and treasure, or peculiar people¹; seeing that in the day when he makes up his jewels, there shall be a manifest difference between his jewels and others, between the righteous and the wicked, those that fear God, and those that fear him not.

If these things are calmly and carefully consider'd, one would think that any impartial and understanding person may be able to determine whether Christ, in giving himself, did intend to redeem all men, or a chosen and peculiar number only: If the latter is the true sense of the text, as it appears to me, we might rest here, and seek no farther evidence; for the scriptures do not contradict themselves, the Spirit of truth cannot err or deceive us.

But it may here be objected, that the redemption by Christ is as extensive as the grace of the Father; but the grace of the Father appeared to all men^m, therefore the redemption of the Son extends to all men. Here we shall readily allow, that Christ redeemed all men, in as extensive a sense, as the grace of God is said to have

¹ *Mal. iii. 16.*

^m *Tit. ii. 11.*

appeared to all men : For multitudes in the world, before the writing this epistle, at that time, and since, neither had, nor even now have, any discovery of this grace to them. The “all men” then to whom it appear’d, must mean only some of all sorts, and so makes nothing for the doctrine of universal grace, or universal redemption. In the context, the apostle had been speaking of the duties of aged men and women, of young men and young women, and of servants to their masters ; to which he excited them, by the consideration of that grace which has appeared to all men, or to persons of all ranks and stations, and obliges them to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour : But what argument can be drawn from thence for universal redemption ?

It may be said, the several parts of the text have been urged in favour of particular redemption ; and it must be own’d, that as to the event and effect, the redemption is not, cannot be universal, seeing all are not saved from sin, and purified ; yet the purpose, design, and intention of Christ in giving himself, might extend to all men, though all men are not actually saved. To which I reply, that my text declares the purpose, design, and intention of Christ in giving himself, even to redeem from all iniquity, and purify to himself a
pecu-

peculiar people: Can this mean all men? Did Christ intend, in laying down his life, to sanctify and save all men? If so, then Christ is frustrated and disappointed of his end: How then does the pleasure of the Lord prosper in his hands? How does he see his seed, the travel of his soul? or how does he give eternal life to as many as the Father gave him? If Christ's intention in giving himself was to redeem and save all men, and only some men are saved, how could it be said, he shall be satisfiedⁿ? Could Christ be satisfied to have his intention disappointed, and his promise fail, when he said, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men to me^o?" Or what satisfaction could he take in seeing the scripture broke, which says, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged^p?" or in seeing the will of the Father, that he should lose nothing of all that were given him, frustrated and made void? Where does the scripture speak of Christ's death, and the ends of it in terms of uncertainty, or represent him as coming short of his aim and intention, in dying for sinners? This does not appear to me to be a scripture doctrine, but an invention of men, framed to support an hypothesis, which they are

ⁿ *Isai. liii. 11.*
liii. 4.

^o *John xii. 32.*

^p *Isai.*

fond of: But till some scripture evidence is brought to support it, we may justly reject it. But I proceed to the next thing proposed.

2. I shall shew the weight and importance of this doctrine, relating to the extent of Christ's redemption.

It must be obvious, to every diligent enquirer into these things, how prone men generally are to run into extremes, in this, as well as in other things. Some look upon all enquiries of this nature as vain and useless; and others are so much taken up with them, as to neglect other weighty doctrines, or duties of the Christian religion. The conduct of each sort is blameable and carefully to be avoided. With what view and design Christ laid down his precious life, is, whatever some think, a point of very great moment, with regard to the sense of many scriptures, the glory of Christ, and of the divine perfections, the encouragement of faith, and the comfort and establishment of believers, as may more fully appear hereafter. A clear decision of the controversy upon this head, must be allowed to be of very great service towards the removal of the heavy imputations with which the contending parties load each others scheme, and to allay our heats, and remove our divisions, that we might stand fast in one spirit,

stri-

striving together for the faith of the gospel, against the common enemy, who is sapping and subverting the very foundations of it.

A late writer ^a has had the confidence to tell the world, in print, that the training up his apostles was the work, or the main work that God had given Christ to do; and that it was his principal design, in giving up himself a sacrifice, that he might enable them by his death, and what would follow it, his resurrection, ascension, and the sending of the Holy Ghost, to preach with success, and spread his kingdom in the world: "What words (says our author) can well raise our idea of the office of the apostles higher, than that Jesus lived and died, to prepare them for the due discharge of that trust?" We may add, what words can sink our idea of Christ's office lower, or cover the design of his death with more disgrace? If Christ's principal design in giving up himself a sacrifice, was to prepare the apostles for the due discharge of their work, we need not trouble our selves about the general or special ends of his death, whether he gave himself to redeem all men, or some only; nor much concern our selves

^a The Lord Barrington, in his *Miscellanea Sacra*, Vol. II. p. 76, 77.

with what the apostle meant, by Christ's giving himself to redeem from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works ; seeing, according to our author, this was not Christ's principal end and intention, in dying, to save men ; but to set up the apostles above himself, and obtain a kingdom by their means. It is very strange that the apostle should forget all this dignity, to which Christ, by his death, had advanced him, and not say one word of it, in the account which he gives us of the end and design of Christ's death. Farther, to what purpose are we told that Christ gave himself for us, to reconcile and bring us to God, that he purchased the church with his own blood, and obtain'd eternal redemption for us, and wash'd us from our sins in his own blood ? How little reason had the church to adore and praise him for this, if the chief business of his life and death was to procure apostles, to preach the gospel, and advance his kingdom in the world ?

Forasmuch then as things are come to this pass among us, and the intention and design of Christ's death is not only mistaken by some, as to the numbers of the redeemed, but, which is infinitely worse, seeing it is so openly and impiously perverted and denied by others, it is high time to make a strict enquiry into this matter,
and,

and, if possible, to find out and establish the true end and design of Christ's death, according to the scripture account thereof: And especially, seeing the sacred writings speak so much of it, and lay such a stress upon it, with regard to the glory of God, and the salvation of men. And it ought to be considered, whether the rendering the end of Christ's death so precarious to all, and the allowing, as some must do, the disappointment of his intention therein to so many, has not tempted many to run the desperate length of denying all its atoning virtue and salutary effects. If this is found to be true, of what importance must it be to understand and hold fast the true design and intention of Christ, in giving himself to redeem sinners? More, I think, need not be added, as to the importance of the point in hand; I shall therefore throw what I have to say upon it under two heads.

- I. I shall endeavour to establish and confirm the doctrine of particular redemption in several distinct propositions, and shall make plain deductions from them.
- II. I shall answer the principal arguments, and vindicate the chief passages of scripture produced in opposition thereto.

the same persons, though he does not take up time to say, we thus judge, that all died to sin in Christ, and all, at the same time, live in him by faith, and, from that very moment, are bound to live to Christ in newness of life. It was taken for granted, by the apostle, that men could not be dead to sin, but, at the same time, they must live in Christ; “for without him we can do nothing”¹; and therefore, without explaining all this, he describes the same persons, who were, in one sense, dead, to be, in another sense, alive, and bound to use that life, in obeying and glorifying Christ: The word “henceforth” favours this sense; “Then were all dead, that henceforth they who live, should not live to themselves, but to Christ.” What kind of reasoning would it be to say, that Christ died for all that were dead in sins, that henceforth among all that were dead in sins, those who live, should not live to themselves: But to say all were dead to sin, by the death of Christ, that henceforth, or from that very time, they should not live to themselves, but to Christ, who died for them, and rose again, is good and strong reasoning, and of a gospel strain. I think, the argument runs clear and strong, if we apprehend the apostle thus

¹ John xv. 5.

speaking: "In persuading men to fly from the wrath to come, and receive Christ, we feel the constraining influences of his love, in dying for his people, and engaging them all to die to sin, and live to himself." If this is the genuine sense of the text, as I take it to be, the force of the objection is taken off at once; and, I hope, more need not be said in answer to it.

3.) The all for whom Christ is said to die ^u, are those very persons for whose justification he rose again. I ask then, did Christ rise again for the justification of all men? If not, then all mankind are not meant by the all for whom Christ died.

4.) The all for whom Christ died, are new creatures ^w, their sins are not imputed to them, and they are actually reconciled to God ^x, and they are made the righteousness of God in Christ ^y: But this is not the case of all men in the world, but of all the elect, all believers; and hence it follows, that the all for whom Christ died, are not all men, that ever were, are, or shall be, and consequently that from this text it cannot be proved that Christ died for all mankind.

^u Rom. iv. 25.

^w Ver. 17.

^x Ver. 19.

^y Ver. 21.

fil that will, and has assured us, that all that the Father gives him shall come to him, and that he would cast out none of them, but raise up every believer at the last day ^y. So exactly do the Father's election and the Son's redemption agree, with respect to the persons chose and redeemed.

This also plainly appears, from those scripture passages; "According as he hath chose us in him; in whom we have redemption thro' his blood ^z:" They are evidently the same persons who are first said to be chose, and then to be redeemed by the blood of Christ; so exactly commensurate is the latter to the former. And we may observe, that there is not, here or elsewhere, the least intimation that Christ's redemption either exceeds or falls short of the Father's election, in one single instance, or individual person. All who were chose are redeemed, and all who are redeemed in time were chose from eternity.

The same truth is signified in that scripture, "That Jesus should die for that nation, and not for that nation only, but also that he should gather together in one the children of God that were scatter'd abroad ^a;" even the elect people, dispers'd

^y Ver. 37, 40.
51, 52.

^z Eph. i. 4, 7.

^a John xi.

throughout the world. These Christ was to draw to himself, by the virtue of his death, according to his own words; “I, if I am lifted up (crucified) will draw all men to me^b;” all those who are the sons of God by election, or, to use the apostle’s phrase, who are predestinated to the adoption of children^c.

The truth of the proposition that the Father’s election and the Son’s redemption are of the same extent, or that Christ died for all chosen, and those only who were given to him by the Father, I think, is fully proved by the scriptures alledged: The plain deduction and inference from which is, that Christ did not give himself to redeem all men, but a select number only.

2. Christ’s redemption is absolute, certain, and perfect.

By its being absolute and certain, I mean that Christ’s redemption did not depend upon any previous desert in man; nor is the efficacy of it suspended upon the free will of man, so as it should be in his power to make it effectual, or ineffectual, as he pleases. This redemption is said to be perfect, with respect to the end or effect of it, that is, the perfect happiness of all the

^b John xii. 32.

^c Eph. i. 5.

redeemed, who are freed from all sin, and all the penal consequences of it.

We have been often told, that Christ died conditionally for all men, but absolutely for no man; that he procured reconciliation and remission of sins for all men, and yet it might have so happen'd, as that not one person should have enjoy'd either pardon or peace with God, seeing, as some say, Christ left it to men, to embrace or refuse the atonement, as they pleased: But Christ himself asserts, that all that the Father gave him shall come to him^d. How low and mean a notion of redemption is it to say, that Christ made only a conditional purchase, and left it in the power of man to render it effectual, by believing, or to make it null and void by unbelief, as he would? How much this opinion tends to exalt the power and pride of the sinner, and to depreciate the love and redemption of Christ, one would think, must be evident to every intelligent person at the first view. That without faith no man can enjoy eternal redemption, is certain; but that Christ has left it to men to make void the ends of his death, and the intention of his redeeming love, as they please, is contrary to scripture, and

^d John vi. 37.

all good sense. Faith is not of a man's self, it is the gift of God ^e; but it is also the purchase of Christ's blood, and is certainly wrought in the hearts of the redeemed by the Holy Spirit, on the account of the Father's election and Christ's redemption ^f; therefore it is stiled the faith of God's elect, obtained through the righteousness of God our Saviour ^g. Hence Christ said, that his sheep shall hear his voice ^h: Christ spoke not doubtfully, but with certainty and resolution; he did not say, they shall hear my voice, if they will; if not, I submit my will and my work to their will and pleasure. As Christ died for men, without asking their previous consent, so he makes them willing in the day of his power ⁱ, and renders his redemption certainly effectual to all those persons, and for all those ends, for which he gave himself. When it is said, that "Christ is enter'd into heaven for us, having obtained eternal redemption for us, by his blood ^k;" can any thing less be meant, than that Christ, having made a perfect and absolute purchase of salvation, by his death, ascended to heaven, to appear in the presence of God for the redeemed, and to secure their actual and eternal enjoy-

^e Eph. ii. 8.

^f Tit. i. 1.

^g 2 Pet. i. 1.

^h John x. 16.

ⁱ Psal. cx. 3.

^k Heb. ix. 24, 12.

ment of that salvation? If it be said, that Christ obtained redemption for all such as will have it, it must be granted, but then none will have it, but such as God makes willing, as he certainly does all his elect, and none else.

The scriptures speak of the intention and effect of Christ's death, in the most absolute and certain terms; "When enemies we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son, and shall much more be saved by his life ¹." "He died for us, that we should live together with him ^m:" God hath appointed us to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ ⁿ," or actually to enjoy it. What obstacles lay in the way, Christ undertook to remove; whatever is necessary to fit the redeemed for glory, he will see accomplished, and never leave his sheep, for whom he laid down his life ^o, nor part with them out of his hand, but will bring them all safe to heaven: He has given us his word for it, that they shall never perish, but he will give them eternal life. Christ gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity, absolutely, not conditionally, if we would; but he gave himself with resolution to carry the work through, and make it effectual: This,

¹ Rom. v. 10.
^o John x. 28.

^m 1 Thess. v. 10.

ⁿ Ver. 9.

I think, is plainly the sense of my text.

I cannot forbear digressing so far, as to observe what a glorious redemption this is, worthy of him that contrived it, and of him that procured it, and infinitely superior to that conditional redemption, which subjects the will and merits of Christ to the caprice and humour of sinners, and represents him as a well meaning, but weak Redeemer, who intended to save all men, but could not accomplish his design, by reason of mens not doing their part. According to our opponents, Christ's purchase respected his Father rather than men ; it, as they say, procured God a right and power to save men on what conditions he pleased ; so that when it is said, that God was reconciled, it is only meant that he was reconcilable, and Christ did not procure salvation, but only a salvability ; he was but a titular Saviour, a Saviour without salvation, and a Redeemer without redemption : Christ is only the remote cause, but man the immediate cause ; Christ the potential, but man the actual cause of his own redemption : Is this honourable to Christ ?

If Christ died conditionally for all men, to save them, provided they would believe and repent, the question is, Whether he procured these conditions, repentance
and

and faith, for all men, if not, how shall they come by them? If he did, why do not all receive them? seeing Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins. If he does not give them, is it either for want of power, or for want of will? How can he want power, who is God over all, blessed for ever, and, as Mediator, has all power in heaven and earth committed to him? And if it proceeds from a want of will in Christ, that they do not receive them, how then did he intentionally redeem all men, if he with-holds the conditions upon which it is suspended? If it is said, it was not agreed between the Father and the Son that these conditions should be bestowed on all men, then it was because it was not the intention of the Father and the Son, that they should receive them, and so be saved: And if it is so, then neither Father nor Son really intended that all men should be redeemed and saved; for who has resisted their will? Whatever they intended to do shall be done. The matter is not left at uncertainties; Christ's redemption is absolute, certain, and perfect: And hence it follows, that Christ did not die to redeem all men, seeing all men do not enjoy an absolute, certain, and perfect redemption.

3. Christ's suretyship and sufferings are of the same extent : Christ died to redeem all, and only those whose debt he, as their surety, undertook to pay.

Christ is expressly said to be the Surety of a better testament, or covenant ^p : But the question is, whether Christ is only a Surety on God's part to us, as some affirm, or a Surety on our part to God, as others assert ? When God said sacrifice and offering he would not ; or when he declared, that he would not accept the legal sacrifices, as an atonement for the sins of men, then Christ said, " Lo, I come, to do thy will, O God ^q ;" i. e. I put my self in the place of thy chosen people, and, according to thy will, I will suffer in their stead, be a sacrifice for their sins, pay their debt, and redeem them from death : For this end, " God laid upon him the iniquity of us all ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed ^r." What other reason can be given why our sins should be laid and punish'd upon Christ ? or, why we should be healed by his stripes, but his suretyship, or standing in our place, room, and stead, and so suffering the just for the unjust, or giving his life a ransom for many ? On this account, we find God the Father resti-

^p Heb. vii. 22.

^q Psal. xl. 8.

^r Isai. liii. 6.

pulating to Christ that he should see his seed, the travel of his soul, and should be satisfied ^f. There then was an exact agreement between Christ's payment and purchase, between the price he paid, and the persons he redeem'd; he paid the full debt of all, for whom he was Surety, and he secures the eternal redemption of every one, for whom he made the payment. We could neither pay the debt which we had contracted, nor purchase the inheritance which we had forfeited, nor claim the promises which are yea and amen, only in Christ ^t: It is therefore by means of his death, in our room and stead, that we receive the promise of the eternal inheritance ^u.

The grand question here is, For whom was Christ Surety, whose debt did he pay, whose freedom did he procure? Let the event declare this; for certainly Christ did not die in vain, or purchase deliverance, and yet lose the price he paid, or any part of the purchase he made; for that would be contrary to all the rules of justice and righteousness. Who then are they that are deliver'd from the wrath to come, and shall inherit everlasting life? Is this the lot of all men, or of some only? If of some only, as matter of fact proves, then Christ was not the Surety of all men; he

^f Vet. 11.^t 2 Cor. i. 20.^u Heb. ix. 15.

did not die to redeem all men, but some only. If Christ had been Surety of the covenant for all men, and had purchased grace and salvation for all men, then all men should certainly enjoy them^w; for God could not break his covenant, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail.

If it is said, that Christ died to procure and establish a covenant of grace with all mankind, and that every man is born under this covenant, and that the works of nature reveal this covenant to all men, and call all men into it: I answer, that the scriptures no where speak of such an universal covenant of grace, procured by Christ, or made with men. If there was such a covenant subsisting, surely it should have been revealed and made known to all men; but multitudes of persons, yea nations, never had the knowledge of this covenant. God, at first, made a distinction between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent, which has been kept up ever since^x. The covenant was established with Abel, and Cain was rejected: Abel being slain, Seth was raised up, as the seed of the covenant; after him, Noah and his family were taken into covenant with God, and the old world rejected and destroy'd: After that, God established his covenant with

^w Psal. lxxxix. 33, 34.

^x Gen. iii. 15.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whilst Ismael and Esau were excluded. And the Jews were God's covenant people ; but the rest of the nations were suffer'd to walk in their own ways. And, to this day, there are great numbers, not only of persons, but of nations, who never heard of Christ, or the covenant of grace, and are they yet in or under this covenant? " How shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard ^y ?" The works of nature, indeed, teach men many things concerning God, as a Creator, but not as a Redeemer : They discover his being, power, wisdom, goodness, and providence ; but not his saving grace and good pleasure in Christ, nor Christ's merit, intercession, or government; nor can they instruct men in the nature of the covenant established upon those better promises, in the hands of a Mediator ^z, or discover to them the perpetuity of those promises, which are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, or that eternal life comprised in the covenant, but given only in and through the Son of God. These things were hid from ages and generations, who cannot therefore be supposed, by the works of nature, to be called into the covenant of grace. Moreover, if all men are brought under a covenant of grace, how could the

^y Rom. x. 14.^z Heb. viii. 6.

apostles speak of some still under the law, and under the curse ^a, children of wrath, and strangers to the covenants of promise, without Christ, without hope, and without God in the world ^b, especially if Christ was the surety of such an universal covenant?

If Christ is the surety of a covenant, which, though it includes an innumerable company, yet not all men, then he is not the surety of all men, and consequently did not die to redeem all men; for on what grounds can it be said that he died for any more, or others, than those for whom he is surety? How could he be required to die, and satisfy divine justice for any men, otherwise than as he had voluntarily put himself in their room, and had undertaken to satisfy the demands of the law and justice of God on their behalf? If Christ was the surety of an universal covenant, then he paid the debts of all men, made satisfaction for the sins of all men, otherwise he would not have fulfilled his trust, nor have been faithful either to God or man. And if he did satisfy for the sins of all men, then, in justice, all men must be exempted from suffering for them, and so hell is dispeopled at once, or else a double satisfaction would be re-

^a Gal. iii. 10.

^b Eph. ii. 3, 12.

quired for the same sins, which is as contrary to God's justice, as to have none at all. Upon the whole, seeing multitudes suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, for their own sins, 'tis evident, that Christ was not the surety of an universal covenant of grace, was not the surety of all men: and hence the conclusion clearly and strongly follows, that he did not give himself to redeem all men.

4. Christ's oblation and intercession relate to the same persons.

"^c He bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors". For what transgressors? for those whose sins he bore. To offer for the sins of the people, and to pray for them, were the two main parts of the priestly office under the law, and of Christ's priestly office, as 'tis represented under the gospel. "^d It is Christ that died, who also makes intercession for us": And again, "^e We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who also is the propitiation for our sins". The one answers the other: The intercession is founded upon the propitiation. There is no reason to think that Christ died for those for whom he would not interceed, or that he inter-

^c Isa. liiii. 12. ^d Rom. viii. 34. ^e 1 John ii. 1, 2.

ceded for any for whom he did not die ; the scriptures apply both to the same persons, or speak of them as done both for the same persons. There are some for whom we are not to pray^f ; and can we think that Christ pray'd for them himself ? What is Christ's intercession, but a presenting to the Father that sacrifice which he had offer'd for the sins of men, with a desire that they may enjoy the blessings purchased thereby. Christ has told us, ^g " That he did not pray for the world ", therefore he did not die for the world, as the word is taken, for all men ; for if he had offer'd the Sacrifice for all, it would bear a plea for all ; and we cannot conceive that Christ should refuse to interceed for any, whom he loved so well as to bleed and die for them. If it is said, that Christ foresaw the unworthiness of the wicked world, and therefore resolved not to pray for them, it may be also said, that he foresaw the unworthiness of the wicked world, and therefore would not die for them ; for what reason can be given why that wickedness and unworthiness, which is supposed to hinder Christ's praying for them, should not also hinder his dying for them.

^f 1 John v. 16.^g John xvii. 9.

But it may be said, Christ prayed for those that crucified him: He prayed for Jerusalem, and therefore doth not limit his intercession to the elect. I answer, that those for whom Christ prayed on the cross, were afterwards converted, and so appeared to be of the number of God's chosen; and it cannot thence be proved, that he prayed for the forgiveness of all men: if he did or does, one of these two absurdities will follow, either that the Father does not ^h always hear Christ, or that all men shall be forgiven; both which are contrary to scripture. As to Jerusalem, Christ's words relating thereto, are not properly a prayer, but rather an act of human compassion towards the miserable. ⁱ 'Tis not to be thought that Christ would pray for what he knew could not be granted; and he expressly say, ^k "That the things of their peace were now hid from their eyes". Besides, it might be their civil, not their eternal peace, which is spoke of; and then no argument can thence be drawn for Christ's praying for the eter-

^h John xi. 42.

ⁱ Or as some think, Christ refers to his prophetic office in those words, "O that thou hadst known at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, and how often would I have gathered thee", viz. The tendency of my ministry was to shew the way of life and peace, but ye refused instruction. *Collat. Piscat. cum Vorstio*, p. 2, 94.

^k Luke ix. 41.

nal salvation of any besides those given him of the Father.

If then it holds true, that Christ interceeds only for those given him out of the world, and if he interceeds for all for whom he died, then he did not die for all men, seeing all men were not given to him by the Father; and he does not interceed for all men, not for the world, but for a peculiar number given him out of the world: A part given him out of the world, cannot mean the whole world; neither can the words of Christ, ¹“ I pray not for the world”, be restrained to the apostles, because in the same prayer he say, “ Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me, through their word”. Christ’s prayer then extends to all such, as in time believe, and to none else: And therefore so does his death, seeing, as has been proved, his oblation and intercession relate to the same persons.

5. Christ did not die to procure the remission of their sins, whose sins he knew before-hand were irremissible; for that would have been, so far, to have died in vain. It would not have been to have done his Father’s will, but to have acted in direct opposition to it, in purchasing re-

¹ John xvii. 9, 20.

mission for those whose sins can never be forgiven. ^m “The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven to men”. This Christ declared with his own mouth; and did he, after such a declaration, die to procure the pardon of their sins, who can never be forgiven? Far be it from us, to impute such a weakness and absurdity to the only wise God our Saviour. Does Christ forbid us to pray for the pardon of that sin ⁿ, and yet did he shed his blood to procure the pardon of those that were guilty of it? And if he did not die for them, then he did not die for all men.

It will, I suppose, be generally allow'd, that the sins of those actually in hell, are irremissible, for ^o “there the fire is never quenched, and the worm dieth not”; and out of that place there is no redemption. At the very time when Christ suffered, there were multitudes in that place of torment; and how absurd is it to suppose, that Christ paid the price of redemption for millions, who, at that very instant, were suffering the vengeance of eternal fire for their own sins? If it is said, is it not as absurd for Christ to pay the price of their redemption, who were actually in heaven at the time of payment, and so stood

^m Matt. xii. 31. ⁿ 1 John v. 16. ^o Mark ix. 43, 44.

in no need of it? To this we may reply, that those who were in heaven when Christ died, were admitted on the credit of that purchase, which he had undertook to make for them: but Christ could not die for the damned, upon any supposition of their deliverance and salvation; or by virtue of any engagement, on his part, to deliver them. But it may be urged, that Christ was to pay the price of the day and means of grace, and a possibility of their salvation; and this was as much due to God for those in hell, as for any out of it: To this I answer distinctly; That it no where appears in scripture, that Christ stood engaged to purchase a day, and means of grace, and possibility of salvation for all men; and if so, the reason of his suffering for those in hell ceaseth. Besides, it is plain, that many of the damned did never enjoy a day and means of grace; for ^p “God neglected and overlooked them, and suffered them to walk in their own ways”. They lived without God in the world. The gospel was hid from them, and by all their natural or acquired wisdom, ^q they knew not God: what price could Christ have to pay for such? was he to pay for what they never had? In short, Christ could not en-

^p Acts xvii. 30.^q 1 Cor. i. 21.

gage to procure a possibility of salvation for such as could not possibly be saved, as Cain and Judas, and such as committed the sin against the Holy Ghost : and therefore he could not die to render salvation possible to all men.

The deduction from the whole is, that Christ did not intend, by his death, to reconcile and save all men, or to render the salvation of all men possible ; seeing he well knew, that the salvation of some men was, when he died, impossible ; and that they never had enjoyed a day or means of grace or salvation, nor had he undertaken to purchase it for them.

6. Those for whom Christ died, are exempted from condemnation, and shall at last be presented to God with exceeding joy.

The apostle Paul puts this question, “ Who is he that condemneth, it is Christ that died ? ” This is spoke indefinitely, and belongs to all for whom Christ died ; for the apostle puts no guard or limitation upon it. Through Christ’s blood “ there is redemption, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of God’s grace ”. But if multitudes, for whom Christ’s blood was shed, never enjoy that forgiveness, then ’tis not according to the riches of

† Rom. viii. 34. † Ephes. i. 7.

grace, nor indeed according to the strict rules of justice. If any, and especially if the greater part of those, for whom Christ died, are, notwithstanding, eternally condemned, how weak must the apostle's reasoning be, and how groundless and vain his challenge? "Who is he that condemneth, it is Christ that died". On the other hand, if Christ's death exempts all men from condemnation, for whom he died, then his reasoning is just and strong: but then it will thence follow, that he did not die for all men, seeing so many are eternally condemned.

Christ shall see the travel of his soul, and shall be satisfied, and shall hereafter present the redeemed to the Father, with exceeding joy; saying, "Behold I and the children which God hath given me". Now if Christ gave himself for all, and only a remnant are saved, what satisfaction, what joy, can he have, in presenting them to his Father? Instead of saying, "Here am I, and the children whom thou hast given me, the whole world redeemed by my blood"; may we not rather apprehend him saying, "Behold, here is a handful, a small part of those whom I died to redeem; the rest are lost, though it was, O Father, thy will and my in-

* Rom. viii. 34. " Heb. ii. 13.

tention to save them all, yet their will prevailed against thine and mine, and my blood was shed for the greater number in vain". Could this be agreeable to Christ? would this be his seeing the travel of his soul, and being satisfied? what joy could attend the presenting a small part of the redeemed to the Father? But if all for whom Christ died safely arrive in glory, then Christ may be abundantly satisfied, and joy may run through the whole celestial court. It will be a joy to the Father who chose them, to the Son who redeemed them, to the Holy Spirit who fitted them for heaven, to the holy angels who ministered to them, and to the saved themselves, that they are all there; not one lost or missing: and this, according to the scriptures, will be the real event, and true state of the case.

The plain deduction or inference from these premises, is this; that Christ did not intend, by his death, to redeem all men; for then he could not with so much joy present to the Father only a part of them, as the travel of his soul, or purchase of his blood.

The rest of the propositions to be laid down and confirmed, I must refer to my next discourse; and I shall now conclude with this one short reflection upon the whole:

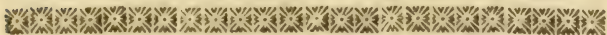
whole: That the doctrine which tends most to debase man and exalt Christ, to take away boasting from us, and to set forth the glory of God, that is the true doctrine of Christ's redemption: for to this end is he made redemption to us,
* "That he that glories, may glory in the Lord.

* 1 Cor. i. 31.





S E R M O N II.



TIT. ii. 14.

Jesus Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.



THE gospel doctrine of our redemption by Christ, tends much to the glory of God, and the happiness of man; it is the admiration of angels, and the envy of devils. Satan, provok'd to the last degree, to see men deliver'd out of his kingdom of darkness and misery, has left no means unattempted, to render that redemption ineffectual,

fectual, as to the application of it; the purchase of which he could not prevent: for this end he has raised up some to deny the deity of the Redeemer, and to place him in the rank of meer creatures, that so they might make void his merit and satisfaction; and so at one blow destroy all real redemption by Christ, pluck the crown from his head, and lay our hopes of happiness expiring with the merit and honour of the Saviour. Others, who do not deny Christ's merit and satisfaction, preclude themselves from the benefit thereof, by setting up a depraved and false medium of application instead of the true one: and here Satan has put men upon running into two dangerous extremes; some place faith in a persuasion of the love of Christ, and of their interest in redemption by him: others rest in that faith, which only receives Christ as the true Messiah, or the Saviour that was to come into the world: and thus the devils believe and yet tremble at the thoughts of their future doom. There is a third sort, with whom is my present concern, who, in extending Christ's redemption to all men, represent it as precarious and uncertain to all, and certainly ineffectual to the greater part of mankind, seeing such multitudes fall short of personal redemption and salvation. I might mention a fourth sort, who from
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the doctrine of universal redemption, draw a confident, though groundless conclusion, that they shall be saved, whatever their faith or practice be, forgetting or denying my text; which asserts, that Christ gave himself to redeem from all iniquity, and purity to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and that therefore such as allow themselves in evil works, indulge iniquity, and are not purified, have no claim to redemption by Christ. By what has been said it appears, how Satan has been endeavouring to subvert our redemption, by his attempts upon the author of it, Christ, the instrument of its application, faith, and by misleading us, as to the objects or extent of it. It concerns us therefore to be sober and vigilant, lest our great adversary prevails against us, in any of the forementioned methods, to be injurious to the Redeemer and to our own souls.

To establish, what I take to be, the true doctrine of redemption, That Christ gave himself to redeem and save a chosen and peculiar number only, several arguments were formerly offered; it was proved, that election and redemption are of the same extent, or do relate to the same individual persons; and that therefore, seeing all are not chose, all are not redeem'd: Christ's redemption is absolute
and

Of Particular Redemption.

and certain ; he cannot fail nor miss of the end and design of his death ; and therefore the end and design of it was not to redeem and save all men, seeing all men are not redeem'd and sav'd. Christ's suretyship and sufferings are of the same extent ; the former being the ground of the latter ; but Christ is not the surety of all men, and therefore he did not suffer and die for all men. The oblation and intercession of Christ relate to the same persons, seeing then he does not intercede for all men, he did not die for all men : Nor is it to be supposed that Christ died to procure the remission of their sins, whose sins were irremissible ; such as the sins of the damned, and the sin against the Holy Ghost ; therefore he did not die for all men ; he did not die to procure remission for those actually in hell at the time of his death, or of those on earth, concerning whom his own lips had declared that they should never be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in the world to come. I further argued, that the redeemed are exempted from condemnation, and shall be presented to God with exceeding joy ; but all men are not exempted from condemnation ; nor shall all men be presented to God with exceeding joy : therefore Christ did not give himself to redeem all men, but a select and chosen number only. These things were
more

more largely insisted on in my preceding discourse, under six distinct propositions : I now proceed to a seventh.

7. There is a strict and inviolable connexion between Christ's sufferings and his saving benefits. All those for whom Christ died, shall be saved by his death ; every person shall enjoy eternal redemption, for whom Christ obtained it.

As God gives, so Christ purchased grace and glory, for all the redeem'd ; therefore, ^a " if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son ; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life ". Christ will perfect his work ; and the same persons who were reconciled by his death, shall be brought to eternal salvation by his life. His intercession in heaven secures the eternal salvation of all those for whom he gave himself an atoneing sacrifice, to reconcile them to God. The purchase and application of redemption are of the same extent.

Our opponents, directly contrary to the cited scripture, teach, that multitudes of those who were reconciled to God by Christ's death, yet shall not, or will not be saved by his life. What then becomes of the apostle's argument for the certainty of mens salvation, drawn from Christ's dying for them, if many for whom he died

^a Rom. v. 10.

may, and must come short of salvation ; if when Christ had reconciled them by his death, they shall not certainly be saved by his life ? “ If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son, much more (says the apostle) much less (say our opponents) shall we be saved by his life. If Christ paid the price of redemption when we were enemies, and atoned God, much more, God being atoned, and a sufficient price of our redemption being paid, shall our eternal salvation be secured by Christ’s life in heaven, where he appears, in the presence of God for us, and pleads the merits of his death for their salvation, whom he reconciled to God thereby. He is too wise, and too kind to those who were the travel of his soul, to lose any of them. Hence he said, ^b “ Father, I will (I claim it as my due) that those whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am ; that they may behold my glory.”

Would any wise man pay down a valuable consideration for that which he had no assurance he should enjoy, or rather, which he knew beforehand he should never enjoy. But so it seems Christ, the wisdom of the Father, must be supposed to do, rather than infringe upon free-will, and man’s sovereign power in his own sal-

^b John xvii. 24.

vation. However, according to the scriptures, Christ did not die in vain ; there is a certain connexion between reconciliation and salvation : Christ's chastisement, and their peace for whom he suffer'd ; his stripes, and their healing for whom he was wounded, are inseparably join'd together. " The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed ^c", said the prophet : But according to our opponents, our peace and healing do not certainly follow Christ's chastisement and stripes. Now whether God or man is to be believed, let every one who is impartial judge. It is farther written, " By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities ^d". Such are justified by Christ, whose iniquities he bore ; that is, suffer'd and satisfied for in his death : To this agree those words of the apostle, " He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification ^e". What a strict connexion is there all along, between Christ's sufferings, and his saving benefits ? and how are the same persons pointed out, as enjoying the salutary effects of Christ's death, for whom he suffered it ?

The apostle argues, that " he who spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, shall with him freely give us all

^c Isa. liii. 5.^d Ver. 11.^e Rom. iv. 25.

things" ^f: That is, all such for whom Christ died, shall enjoy all the saving benefits and fruits of his death, such as effectual calling, justification, and eternal glory before mentioned. God having given up his Son to die for us, will with him give us freely the means of grace, grace it self, and the heavenly glory ^g. For that love to our persons which inclined God to give his own Son, the Son of himself, of his own nature, will also dispose him to give all inferior blessings, for a double reason; partly because this Son was too great and precious a gift to be lost or given for nothing, to be given to such sufferings as he endur'd, and yet lose millions of souls redeem'd by his blood; and also because justice required, that when the Son had paid the price of redemption, he should enjoy the purchase, or things purchas'd, even those for whom God gave him up: And in order thereto, God will give them all things necessary to their salvation ^h. The argument from the cited scripture lies thus; If God, having given up his Son to die for us, will with him freely give us grace and glory, then there is an inseparable connexion between Christ's sufferings,

^f Rom. viii. 32.

^g Ver. 30.

^h One of the ancients upon these words thus expresseth himself. He excepts nothing who is the author of all; art thou afraid of thy judge? consider who he is, namely, Christ,

ings, and his saving benefits ; but God freely, and without any condition gave us Christ, and with him all things, therefore there is an inseparable connexion between Christ's sufferings, and his saving benefits, between his being given up for us, and the giving of all things (grace and glory purchased by Christ) to all those for whom he died.

All the parts of the argument Christ himself has given us in one discourse, leaving it to us to put them together. Christ first described the persons for whom he died, in these words, " I lay down my life for the sheepⁱ". He next declared the certain effect of his laying down his life for them ; " they hear his voice and follow him^k" : And then he draws the conclusion, " I give to them eternal life, and they shall never perish ". Those for whom Christ laid down his life, in time hear his voice, and follow him, and shall enjoy eternal life, as the fruit and purchase of his death for them. And thus from Christ's own words, the truth of our proposition appears ; that there is an inviolable connexion, between Christ's suf-

Christ, to whom the Father has committed all judgment : Can he damn thee, who redeemed thee by his death, for whom he offer'd himself, and whose life he knows to be the reward of his death ? will he not say, what profit is there in my blood, if I condemn him whom I have died to save ? Ambros. lib. 1. de Jacob & vita beatâ. cap. 6.

ⁱ John x. 15.

^k Ver. 27.

ferings and his saving benefits, and that all those for whom Christ died, shall certainly be saved.

This truth may be confirmed by other scripture testimonies: As for instance, from what is said of Christ, That “he died for us, that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with him¹”. This was Christ’s intention and design, that all those for whom he died should live with him in glory: Either then Christ must be disappointed, or else they must for ever live with him for whom he died. Christ gave his flesh for the life of the world^m, and he giveth life to the same worldⁿ. The purchase, and the application of salvation are spoke of, with the same certainty, and in the same extent: There is not the least intimation, that he purchased salvation for all, but applies it only to some; the same world for whom he died, to that world he gives life; but he does not give life to all men; therefore by the world, Christ did not mean all men, but all those throughout the world, who believe on him, for whom he gave his flesh, to purchase their life.

We are assured, that “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses to them; for he

¹ 1 Thess. v. 10. ^m John 6. 51. ⁿ Ver. 33.

has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him^o". Here we may observe, that those whom God reconciles to himself, are those to whom he does not impute their trespasses; those to whom God does not impute their trespasses, are those for whom Christ was made sin; those for whom Christ was made sin, are those who are made the righteousness of God in him: Therefore, the non-imputation of sin, and the imputation of righteousness, belong to all, and only those for whom Christ was made sin, and whom God was in him reconciling to himself.

We are told, that Christ, by his own blood, enter'd in once into the holy place, having obtain'd eternal redemption for us^p; that his blood purges our consciences from dead works; and that by means of his death, they which are called receive the promise of an eternal inheritance. If Christ's death obtain'd eternal redemption, if it purges the conscience, and secures the eternal inheritance, then there is a strict connexion between Christ's sufferings and his saving benefits; but the former is true, and therefore so is the latter. Christ's death is not as a medicine laid up in a box, for such as may happen to make use of it,

^o 2 Cor. v. 19, 21.

^p Heb. ix. 12, 14, 15.

but it is effectually and certainly apply'd to all for whom it was prepared: "By his stripes we are healed"^a; "all that the Father hath given me shall come"^r, saith Christ. If he obtained eternal redemption for us, then all those for whom he obtained it, do and shall enjoy that redemption; otherwise it is so far from being eternal redemption, that it is as no redemption at all.

If it be said, that Christ obtained eternal redemption for all, conditionally, but not absolutely, the question is, whether Christ purchased this condition for them or not; if he did, then they must certainly enjoy it: If he did not purchase this condition, how did he obtain eternal redemption for them? Or how shall they come by this condition, as for instance, faith, seeing that is not of a man's self^t? nor is this way of enjoying this redemption, or the redemption it self, so much as revealed, and made known to multitudes of men; and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard^t? Remission of sins is so great a part of redemption, that it is put for the whole of it, when it is said, "In whom we have redemption, through his blood, the forgiveness of sins"^u. The

^a Isa. liii.^r John vi. 7.^t Ephes. ii. 8.^u Rom. x. 14.^u Ephes. i. 17.

latter,

latter, forgiveness of sins through Christ's blood, is here meant, by our being redeemed by his blood. If then we have the forgiveness of sins included in, or flowing from redemption by Christ's blood, then all those who were redeemed by his blood, have also forgiveness of sins, and consequently either all are pardoned, or all were not redeemed, seeing redemption necessarily includes forgiveness, or there is an inviolable connexion between them; which is the assertion I am proving. If this is disallowed, how shall we secure the honour of God's wisdom, the sincerity of his love, or maintain the value of Christ's death, or God's equity and righteousness? Was Christ's blood shed for all men, and yet are only some saved? Could Christ die at uncertainty, whether he should have a seed or no, or how great or small it should be, or whether the divine love should enjoy all, or half, or a fourth part of its objects, as it must be, if it depends on the free and uncertain will of man, whether the redeemed shall be actually saved, or not? God sent forth his Son, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons: This, in the purchase of it, we received in Christ's death, and therefore we are said to be sons before conversion; "Because you are sons, God has
sent

sent forth the Spirit into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father ^w." The application answers the purchase, and actually follows upon it. Christ redeemed those for whom he died from bondage, and procured for them the glorious privilege of being the sons of God; and being thus made sons, as to the price paid for it, the Father grants the thing purchased, and bestows the Spirit of adoption on the redeemed people. Now do all enjoy this Spirit of adoption? Can all men cry, Abba, Father, or go to God with a filial frame, under the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit? If not, as is most true, then Christ did not die for all men, to redeem them from the curse, and make them sons, seeing there is such an inseparable union between redemption and adoption.

Because this argument is so conclusive and decisive, let us enter a little deeper into it, and more firmly establish it, by shewing the grounds and reasons of this strict connexion between Christ's sufferings, and his saving benefits.

(1.) Christ's death had in it the nature of a price of redemption. We are told, in scripture, that we are bought with a price ^x; and what that price was, we elsewhere read, when mention is made of the church

^w Gal. iv. 4, 5, 6.

^x 1 Cor. vi. 20.

of God, which he purchased with his own blood^y; and when it is declared that we were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ^z. It is the blood of Christ, which in this business has that use, which silver and gold has in the redeeming of captives; as one^a has observed. It is called, in scripture, ἀντίλυτρον, a price of redemption for the delivery of another. Now if Christ paid a price of redemption for all, then, according to the rules of justice, all must be deliver'd, otherwise Christ had not his due: If then all are not delivered, Christ did not pay this price of redemption for all men, seeing all for whom he paid the price do and must enjoy the thing purchased. He who is righteous in all his ways, cannot be unrighteous to his own Son, in withholding what he had bought with his precious blood.

(2.) That love which caused God to give his Son, and which caused Christ to give himself to redeem sinners, cannot lose or be deprived of vast numbers of persons, on whom it had fixed, and for whom it gave a ransom, and therefore all the redeemed must be saved; and if all were redeemed, then all must be saved, for

^y Acts xx. 28.

^z 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

^a Dr.

Owen against Biddle, p. 464.

God will not lose the objects of his love.

But it may be objected, the consequence drawn from the divine love doth not follow, seeing God and Christ loved all men, and intended their salvation only conditionally, provided they would believe, but left that to themselves, as being in their own power: I answer; then God and Christ left it in the power of their enemies, whether they should have any objects of their love or not; for as many never do or will believe, so the rest might not have done it, and then both Father and Son had loved in vain, and Christ had died in vain; and, according to the objectors, God is brought down to a mean dependance upon his creatures, unworthy of his sovereign power and grace, and God's satisfaction and honour are put into the power, or subjected to the pleasure of foolish and disobedient men ^b. But if God had such a love to all men, why did he not keep their salvation in his own hands, and secure it to them all? Could not the same love which gave Christ for all, have secured the happiness of all men, if indeed it did give him for all, and would act like itself, or according to this large extent of its objects? But, moreover, where does

^b Titus iii. 3.

the scripture represent the love of God as conditional? Is it not said to be free, and from everlasting, and the spring of all the good that is wrought in or done to men? They are “ saved and called, not according to their own works, as previous conditions, but according to God’s purpose and grace given them in Christ Jesus, before the world began^c;” which is very contrary to that conditional love, mentioned in the objection.

(3.) The Father’s love to Christ renders it necessary that all such should enjoy salvation, for whom Christ, by his death, procured it. Would not a kind father, among men, certainly give to his child what he had lawfully and fully purchased? and shall not the great God give to his Son all the travel of his soul, all the purchase of his blood? Did Christ so love multitudes as to satisfy the justice of God for their sins, and obtain eternal glory for them? and shall his Father, who loves his Son, and gives all things into his hands^d, permit his loss of a great part of the travel of his soul, and the purchase of his blood, as it actually comes to pass, if Christ loved and died for all men, and yet so great a number of them perish? How can this be consistent with the Father’s

^c 2 Tim. i. 9.

^d John iii. 35.

love to Christ, any more than it is with Christ's love towards those for whom he died? Such a failure and loss seems to argue a great defect in the love of God to his Son, as well as a want of it to men, and carries in it an appearance of feebleness, dependance, and changeableness, no ways becoming the perfections of the great God, particularly his sovereignty, power, and infinite love, so much celebrated in scripture, and admired by the saints in all ages.

Upon the aforesaid grounds, with others that might have been mentioned, it appears, that there is a strict connexion between Christ's sufferings, and his saving benefits; or that it is reasonable to believe that all those who were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son, shall certainly be saved by his life. And from this proposition, thus established, the inference is very plain and strong, that Christ did not suffer and die to redeem all men, but a peculiar number only, who shall certainly be saved.

8. Christ died only for them for whom he purchased all the means necessary to their enjoyment of salvation; particularly faith and repentance, and the Holy Spirit, the Author of each of them.

Some may wonder to hear of the purchase of the Spirit, who is a free Spirit,
and

and works all things according to his own will ; and it may be thought that he is not therefore to be bought any more than Christ was. But whatever some may think, the mission, and the work of the Holy Spirit are, in scripture, spoke of, as the fruit and effects of Christ's death ; as when he said, " Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, if I go not away the Comforter will not come ; but if I depart, I will send him to you, and, when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness and judgment^e. By going away and departing, Christ meant his death, with what followed it : This death was necessary to the coming of the Spirit, to convince and convert sinners, and to comfort believers. The case stood thus : All men, by nature, were under the law, and under the curse, in a state of sin and misery, by reason of sin ; the first covenant had in it no promise, either of repentance or pardon, or of the Holy Spirit, to work the one, or apply the other, being made with a perfect man, who needed none of them ; and fallen man could not receive these fruits of divine love, but by virtue of the new covenant, which was to be confirm'd by the blood of Christ, which blood also purchased all the saving bles-

^e John xvi. 7, 8.

sings of it, satisfied justice, removed the curse, and procured eternal life for the redeemed, and all that was previously necessary to the enjoyment of it. The church was purchased by the blood of Christ, and is made a church by the Holy Spirit ^f; who, according to the order and method of salvation, is engaged to renew and fit for heaven all, and only those, whom Christ, by his blood, redeem'd from misery, and entitled to glory. Accordingly we read, that Christ redeemed them that were under the law, by being made under the law for them, or by enduring its curse and penalty, in his death, which also procured the adoption of children for us, and the Holy Spirit to work a filial disposition in us. God sent his Son to redeem us, and, by virtue of that redemption, his Spirit, to renew us ^g. We receive the promise of the Spirit through faith ^h: The ministration of the Spirit belong'd not to the law, but to the gospel, which is called faith. Christ, by his accursed death, redeemed his people from the curse, and procur'd the promised Spirit, the attendant of the gospel dispensation ⁱ. On this account, the apostle asks, "Received you the Spirit by the works of the law, or by

^f Acts xx. 28.^g Gal. iv. 6.^h Chap. iii. 14.ⁱ Ver. 13.

the hearing of faith ^k." It is by virtue of the gospel covenant, ratified by the blood of Christ, that the promise of the Spirit, or the promised Spirit, is received. "If (as one ^l observes) the blood of Christ had not been shed on the cross, the Spirit had not been pour'd out from heaven; the effusion of the one, was the cause of the effusion of the other." And as we obtain the Spirit, so we obtain faith through Christ, for his sake, or on the account of his purchase of it. Faith is obtain'd thro' the righteousness of God our Saviour ^m; it is on the behalf, or for the sake of Christ, that it is given to men to believe ⁿ: This gift was procured by the blood of Christ, who therefore is called the author and the finisher of our faith ^o. If Christ is the author of our faith, he must be the purchaser of it, for he gives nothing to us but what, by his merits, he purchased for us. Christ, by his death, having procured all spiritual blessings for his people, and repentance, among the rest, is exalted to give it; he is a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins ^p: These both flow from him as a Saviour, and therefore as a

^k Gal. iii. 2.^l Dr. Bates's Works, p. 223.^m 2 Pet. i. 1.ⁿ Philip. i. 29.^o Heb. xii. 2.

See Dr. Owen upon the place.

^p Acts v. 31.

sufferer, as one that purchased them by his precious blood, and we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus⁹.

It is, on all hands, agreed, that without faith and repentance men cannot be saved : But whence do these flow, and how do they come by them ? Either men have a natural power to repent and believe, or else faith and repentance are, as the scriptures speak, the purchase and the gifts of Christ ; if they are the purchase and gifts of Christ, then Christ, by his death, did not purchase salvation conditionally if men of themselves, or by their own power, would repent and believe. He purchased salvation absolutely and perfectly, and all the necessary means of it, so as men shall repent and shall believe ; and if this is true, then the conditional salvation, which, some assert, is a mere fallacy ; and the redemption of all men by the death of Christ is not true, seeing all men do not receive from Christ the gifts of faith and repentance, as they should do, if he had purchased them for all men.

Our opponents^r, indeed, deny that Christ, by his death, procured faith and repentance, in maintenance of which opinion they alledge the following reasons.

⁹ Heb. x. 11.
p. 110.

^r Dr. Whitby on the Five Points,

(1.) They urge, that Christ wanted neither power nor will to work them in the hearts of men ; to which I answer, that it might as well have been said, that Christ did not obtain eternal redemption for us, seeing he wanted neither power nor will to redeem us. The power and will of Christ, in this matter, are to be consider'd as acting according to the oeconomy^t, and the method of salvation agreed upon between the divine Persons. Christ says, that he could do nothing of himself^t, that is, beside, or beyond, or contrary to the will of the Father, now it evidently was the will of the Father, that in bringing many sons to glory, the Captain of our salvation should be made perfect through sufferings, and that by the effusion of his blood, he should obtain for us eternal redemption, and therefore all things included in it.

(2.) It is alledged, that to make Christ procure both the promise and the condition, by the same act and passion, is to turn the conditional covenant into one that is absolute ; I answer, if that turn makes it conformable to God's covenant, it is so much the better. God says, “ This is the

^t Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him, John xvii. 2.

^t Chap. v. 30.

covenant that I will make; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: All shall know me, from the least to the greatest; for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more^u." Let our opponents tell us, where we shall, in this account, find the condition of the covenant, on man's part. Supposing some things are required, in order to the enjoyment of other things, where is the absurdity for Christ to render the promised blessing certain, and to secure what is called the condition of enjoying it? "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord^w;" and blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God^x." Did Christ then change the nature of the covenant, by giving himself to redeem his people from all iniquity, and to purify them unto himself?

(3.) It is said, that Christ's sacrifice was not intended to procure any other benefit, but the removal of guilt. I wonder then how Paul could say, that by means of Christ's death, they who are called receive the promise of eternal inheritance^y; is that no more than the removal of guilt? How did Christ's blood purchase the church?

^u Heb. viii. 10, 12.

^w Chap. xii. 14.

^x Matt.

v. 8.

^y Heb. ix. 15.

did it only pay their old debt, and turn them loose to get to heaven, as well as they could of themselves?

(4.) It is said, that Christ's purchase of faith and repentance is repugnant to the nature of these graces. It might as well have been said, that Christ's purchase of forgiveness is repugnant to the nature of forgiveness. If Christ has purchased the forementioned graces, then God is obliged to confer them, says the objector; and where is the harm of that? Has not God obliged himself to give Christ a seed, and that he shall see the travel of his soul, and shall be satisfied that he will divide him a portion with the great, and that he shall divide the spoil with the strong^z?

How weak are these objections against our position? That Christ purchased grace, as well as eternal life, by his death. Wherein is it contrary to the nature of faith or repentance, that Christ should purchase them, seeing faith is not of a man's self^a, and repentance is the gift of Christ^b? Why may he not purchase them, as well as give them? Is there any thing in them too great or too small for Christ to purchase? But so dark and senseless an objection, as the last above men-

^z Isai. liii. 11, 12.
v. 31.

^a Ephes. ii. 8.

^b Acts

tioned, deserves no further notice, nor indeed that regard which has been had to it.

The objections of our opponents being thus fairly answer'd, our proposition stands firm and true, that Christ purchased all the necessary means of salvation, for all those for whom he died; from whence this conclusion may be drawn, that Christ did not die for all men, seeing he did not purchase the necessary means of salvation for all men.

9. The attainment of the end and design of Christ's redemption, is highly pleasing, both to Christ and to his Father.

The prophet Isaiah represents God saying, "Behold my elect, in whom my soul delights ^c;" and, by a voice from heaven, when Christ was enter'd upon his work, he said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ^d;" and when Christ actually offer'd up himself a sacrifice to God, it is said to be of a sweet smelling savour ^e. God was so well pleased with Christ's performance, that he raised him from the dead ^f, received his human nature into heaven ^g, crowned it with glory and honour ^h, and placed him at his own right hand ⁱ, and gave him a name

^c Isai. xlii. 1.

^d Matt. iii. 17.

^e Eph. v. 2.

^f Heb. xiii. 20.

^g 1 Tim. iii. 16.

^h Heb. ii. 9.

ⁱ Chap. xii. 2.

that is above every name ^k, appointed him a kingdom ^l, and made him Lord and Judge of all ^m; sent the Spirit to glorify him in the world ⁿ, required all the angels of God to worship him ^o, and all men to honour the Son, even as himself ^p. All which things shew how satisfactory and pleasing Christ's work of redemption was to God the Father. But this satisfaction could not arise from Christ's sufferings absolutely consider'd; for he, who does not willingly grieve the children of men ^q, could not take pleasure in the sufferings of his own Son, purely on the account of the sufferings themselves, but it was with a view to the end, and the fruit of them, that they were so pleasing to him. And this naturally leads us to enquire what was the end and design of Christ's giving himself, in which God took such satisfaction: What could it be less than doing the Father's will, and finishing his work, his redeeming and saving all given him by the Father, and losing none of them; in a word, his glorifying the Father, and his bringing the many sons to glory ^r? Christ also is represented as set up from everlasting, having his delights with the sons

^k Philip. ii. 9.

ⁿ Chap. x. 42.

^q Lam. iii. 33.

^l Luke xxii. 29.

^o John xvi. 14.

^r John vi. 39.

^m Acts ii. 36.

^p Chap. v. 23.

of men ^f; we perceive the love of God, in that he laid down his life for us ^t; he delighted to do this will of God ^u, and rejoiced in the prospect of having a body prepared for him, in which he should suffer, and satisfy for the sins of men, and by dying redeem them from eternal death: This was the travel of his soul, which he was to see, and with which he was satisfied ^w: This was the joy set before him, for which he endured the cross ^x: The glory he should bring to God, and the happiness which he should procure and secure to men.

Now if Christ redeem'd men so imperfectly, and so uncertainly, as that though he died for all men, yet all men might have died eternally notwithstanding, and the most of them actually do so, what becomes of the Father's glory and man's happiness, of God's love to sinners, and Christ's strong affection to them? How could the Father be pleased in such a loose and uncertain purchase, and in so small a part of mankind, when he gave his Son to redeem all men? Could it be pleasing to him, that when he designed the redemption of all men, such a multitude should be lost, and the salvation of those who obtain it should be left so precarious, de-

^f Prov. viii. 31.

^t 1 John iii. 16.

^u Psal. xl. 8.

^w Isai. liii. 11.

^x Heb. xii. 2.

pending more on the will of man, than upon the love and care of the Father, or the redemption of the Son? With what pleasure could the all-wise God look upon such a kind of redemption as this? Or what satisfaction could Christ take in seeing the end and design of his death so greatly disappointed, if he really intended to save all men by his death, and only a remnant are saved? Or how could he be satisfied? not certainly to intend the salvation of any of those, whom he and his Father so dearly loved, and for whom he suffer'd such a bitter death. Could Christ be so profuse of his blood, and was his conflict with God's wrath and vengeance such a light matter, as that he could, with satisfaction, throw away the one, and endure the other, without securing the salvation of so much as one soul, instead of redeeming all men?

Upon the whole; seeing both Father and Son are so well pleased in Christ's work of redemption, and the fruit and end of it, we may conclude that Christ did not die to redeem all men conditionally and uncertainly, but that he died for a peculiar number, who shall certainly be presented to God, with exceeding glory and joy^y, both on the part of God and

^y Jude, *ver.* 24.

Christ, and the redeemed peculiar people.

10. The redeemed are represented, in scripture, under distinct discriminating characters, or as a select peculiar people.

Thus they are spoke of in my text, and a multitude of other places; where they are called Christ's people ^a, his body ^a, his sheep ^b, the church ^c, the children of God ^d. Christ, when he said that he laid down his life for his sheep, included in that expression the elect Gentiles, those other sheep ^e, which he says he must bring, implying, that all the chosen shall, by him, be brought to God; and he told some of the Jews, that they did not believe, because they were not of his sheep ^f, implying, that all his sheep, for whom he laid down his life, are brought to believe in him. How could Christ be said to be the Redeemer of his people, of his body, of the church, in distinction from others, if he is the Redeemer of the whole world, of all men? The church cannot mean the world, his people cannot mean all people; those redeemed from among men ^g, cannot mean all men, those from among whom they were redeemed; nor can those re-

^a Matt. i. 21.

^a Eph. v. 23.

^b John x. 16.

^c Eph. v. 25.

^d John xi. 52.

^e Chap. x. 16.

^f Ver. 26.

^g Rev. xiv. 4.

deemed out of every people and nation ^h, signify all people, and all nations, or all men.

Upon this head, our opponents observe, that though Christ is said to die for his sheep, his people, and the like, yet it is not said “that he died for them only,” and none besides; but it is said that he died for the world, the whole world, or all men. To which I reply, that though the restrictive term, “only,” is not expressed, yet it is necessarily implied, and understood, in the scriptures, where Christ is said to die for his people, his sheep, and for his people; for if all men were intended by these expressions, what need is there of any terms of peculiarity? If all men are redeemed, then there is not a select number redeemed; for to redeem a select number out of all men, and to redeem all men, are contradictory one to the other; so that the exclusive word, “only,” is implied in those scriptures, where Christ is said to die for his sheep, and his people. It is said, there is one God, and one Mediator, but the word “only” is not added; shall we then say, that there are more gods than one, and more mediators than one, between God and man? When a legacy is bequeathed to one man, is it given

^h Rev. v.

to others, because the word “only” is not added? If when it is said, that Christ loved his church, and gave himself for itⁱ, all men are included, because the word “only” is not added, then when men are commanded to love their wives, as Christ loved the church, they are allowed to extend their conjugal affection to all women, besides their wives, because it is not said, “Love your wives only;” this may suffice to remove the objection, and establish the proposition, that the redeemed are represented under discriminating restrictive terms; and from hence the deduction is plain, that the redeemed are a peculiar people, and not all men.

II. The necessary means of salvation are afforded to all those for whom Christ died, to render their salvation possible.

To deny this proposition, is to affirm that Christ died to render that possible, which, in the nature of the thing, is impossible. It is eternal life to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ^k: On the other hand, not to know them is eternal death. If Christ, by his death, render’d the salvation of all men possible, on the conditions of faith and repentance, it is but reasonable to suppose that they all shall enjoy the necessary means of that faith and

ⁱ Ephes. v. 25.

^k John xvii. 1.

repentance, otherwise Christ purchased a possibility of salvation, on an impossible condition, or without the necessary conditions of that possibility, or the necessary means of attaining those necessary conditions.

The dispute, at present, is not whether any man can be saved by Christ, without faith in him, but whether any man can believe in Christ, who never knows Christ, nor has heard of him; "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" The apostle's argument lies thus: They who do not hear the word, cannot believe; they cannot hear the word, to whom it is not preached; they cannot preach it whom God doth not send, therefore they cannot be saved, to whom God does not send the preaching of the word. Thus the apostle proved the necessity of the means of grace, in order to faith, and of faith in order to salvation. If then Christ died equally for all men, why is he not equally revealed to all men? If the greatness of mens sins did not hinder him from giving himself a ransom for all men, why should it prevent his revealing himself to all men? If infinite love moved Christ to die for all men, why did not the same love engage him to make

¹ Rom. x. 14, 15.

himself known to all men? especially seeing without this knowledge they could have no faith in him, or salvation by him. Is it credible that Christ should shed his precious blood to redeem all men, and yet never discover this gracious design to them, to win their hearts, and engage them to believe in him, and adhere to him, to the saving of their souls? Did Christ die to render the salvation of all men possible, and then destroy that possibility, by withholding from thousands the necessary means of that faith, without which they could not be saved? Would this be acting like the only wise God our Saviour?

But it may be said, that the reason of God's with-holding the means of grace from some, may be their obstinacy and unworthiness; the abuse of the light they had, and a foresight that they would abuse clearer light, if they had it. To this I answer, all men are naturally obstinate and unworthy; and if God deals with men according to their obstinacy and unworthiness, not only some men, but even all men should be excluded from the means of grace. If it is said, there are degrees of unworthiness, and some are better disposed than others, to improve the means, which may be a reason why they are granted to some, and with-held from others: To this it may be replied, that Christ has told

us, that Tyre and Sydon, and the land of Sodom ^m, would have made a better use of his preaching than the towns of Galilee had done, yet the former never enjoy'd this light, but the latter did; which plainly shews, that the means of grace are not always granted to those whom God foresaw would make a good use of them, nor are with-held from such as it was foreseen would make a bad use of them. It is best therefore to rest in that reason of this procedure assigned by Christ, God's sovereign will and pleasure; "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes; even so, Father, because it seemed good in thy sight ⁿ."

The general and universal terms used, concerning the preaching the gospel to every creature, and to all the world ^o, and to the ends of the earth ^p, are not to be understood in the utmost extent; for so it is evident they never were, nor can be fulfilled; seeing multitudes are dead, who never heard any thing of Christ or the gospel ^q, or so much as any part of God's revealed will; "As for his judgments, they have not known them ^r:" For how long a time

^m Matt. xi. 21, 22, 23.

ⁿ Ver. 25, 26.

^o Mark

xvi. 15.

^p Rom. x. 18.

^q Coloss. i. 23.

^r Psal. cxlvii. 20.

did God suffer the nations to walk in their own ways, and wink'd at the times of their ignorance? nay, in the days of gospel light, some places were expressly excluded from the preaching of the word: Paul and his companions were forbid, by the Holy Ghost, to preach the word in Asia^f; and when they attempted to go into Bithynia, the Spirit suffer'd them not: So that the commission to teach all nations, and preach the word to every creature, must be explain'd in a general sense, and not according to the utmost extent of the words, including strictly every individual person. Not only the Jews, but the other nations were to have the light shine upon them, where-ever God pleased to send his messengers: But how many are there, at this day, who know nothing of Christ, and the way of salvation by him? and is it credible that God should give his Son to be a ransom for all, and not give him to be a light to all men? Did Christ die to put all men into a salvable condition, as it is called, and then, as if he repented, leave the greatest part destitute of the necessary means of faith and salvation?

Our opponents are in the utmost distress upon this head, and know not how to reconcile an universal ransom, with a re-

^f Acts xvi. 6, 7.

strain'd and partial revelation of Christ to men ^t. How is it consistent with the divine wisdom for Christ to die to render the salvation of all men possible, and yet leave many of them destitute of those means, without which it is not possible, according to the scriptures, that they should be saved? "Where there is no vision, the people perish ^u;" "they are lost to whom the gospel is hid ^w;" "such as have not the Son have not life ^x;" "without faith it is impossible to please God ^y;" "he that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him ^z;" and how shall men believe in him, of whom they have not heard ^a?" So then without faith there is no salvation; without hearing of Christ there can be no faith in him, or salvation by him; and by withholding the revelation of Christ from vast numbers, God renders their salvation impossible, which it is said Christ, by his death, had render'd possible: And thus the purchase of the Son is made void, by the providence of the Father, according to the scheme of our opponents. But God forbid it should be so, in reality! For what kind of wisdom or prudence could there

^t Vide Limb. Theol. Lib. IV. cap. 4. p. 317. ^u Prov. xxix. 18. ^w 2 Cor. iv. 3. ^x 1 John v. 12. ^y Heb. xi. 6. ^z John iii. 36. ^a Rom. x. 14.

be, either in the Father, or the Son, for Christ to shed his precious blood, to redeem myriads, to whom, after all, they did not think fit to give any notice of it, or any means of enjoying the redemption obtained for them? Or how is it consistent with the justice or goodness of God, for him to with-hold the knowledge of the way of salvation from multitudes, for whom Christ purchased a possibility of salvation? Had not men better quit their notion of universal redemption, than be so injurious to the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, as, according to their doctrine, they must unavoidably be? The difficulty is not removed by saying, that those who never enjoy the revelation of Christ, are shut out from it, by their negligence and disobedience, seeing Christ is found of them who sought him not, and is made manifest to them that asked not after him; and all the day long stretches out his hand to a disobedient and gainsaying people^b: There must then be some other reason of God's leaving so many destitute of the revelation of Christ; for this no good reason can be given, upon a supposition that Christ redeemed all men: But if it is allowed that he redeemed only a select number, good reasons may be

^b Rom. x. 20, 21.

assigned why the gospel is sent to some places, and not to others; and why it continues longer in one place, than in another, because Christ has much people there^c; and in many places it never comes, because the elect, the redeemed, obtain, but the rest are blinded^d.

Upon the whole, our position holds true, that the necessary means of salvation are afforded to all those for whom Christ died, to render their salvation possible; and hence the conclusion follows, that Christ did not die to render the salvation of all men possible, seeing all men have not the necessary means of salvation.

12. The intention and design of Christ's redemption, is agreeable to scripture and reason, and stands clear of all absurdities and inconsistencies.

To deny this proposition, would be to cast the most injurious reflections on the Redeemer, and his work, directly contrary to God the Father; who, on the account of Christ's becoming obedient to the death of the cross, has highly exalted him, and has given him a name above every name.

Christ's intention in giving himself, was, according to the scriptures, to re-

^c Acts xviii. 10.

^d Rom. xi. 7.

deem men from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people; and it appears to be reasonable; that his intention should be accomplished, and that he should not shed his precious blood in vain, or be disappointed of his end, with respect to the greatest part of those for whom he died. But thus it must be, if he died to render the salvation of all men possible, on condition they believe in him, and yet leaves so great a part of them under an impossibility of performing that condition, or enjoying the salvation, by not revealing or making himself known to them, as was observed before.

The scriptures no where speak of a conditional, uncertain redemption of men, depending on the will of the fallen creature, as to all its salutary effects. It is contrary to reason for Christ to leave salvation depending upon the will of man, which had ruined him in his best estate, and was not at all likely to save him in his worst. How could Christ expect that the intention of his death should be accomplished in such a way? Will the fallen creature take more care to secure the good effects of his death, than the Sufferer and Saviour himself did? How inconsistent and absurd must it be for Christ to exercise the greatest love towards,

wards, and inflict the greatest wrath upon the same persons, at the same time? As it must be, if he, in infinite love, died to redeem all men; and yet multitudes in hell were suffering his vengeance, at the same time that he loved them, and gave himself for them. Does it not sound very harsh and shocking to say, that the saved are no more beholden to the Redeemer, than the damned? And yet this is true, if Christ loved and died equally for all men. How contrary, both to scripture and reason, is it to charge God with taking a double satisfaction for the same sins, one from Christ, and another from the damned themselves? Which yet is fact, if Christ died for all men, and satisfied the justice of God for all men. Could Christ, in infinite love, die for all men, without any fixed intention and resolution, to save any one man? Could Christ come to do the will of God, and yet subject all to the will of men, and leave it to them whether the Father should have the pleasure, and Christ the satisfaction, in redemption, foretold and promised^e; whether the Father should enjoy one object of his love, or Christ the travel of his soul, in one

^e *Isai. liii. 10, 11.*

single instance or not? And yet so it was, according to their scheme, who say, that Christ died to purchase salvation conditionally for all men, but absolutely and certainly for no man, leaving it to men, either to make it effectual, by believing, or of no effect by their unbelief. How shall men be convinced, that Christ crucified is the wisdom of God to salvation, if not so much as one soul had its salvation certainly secured, by Christ's sufferings, and that too when, as it is said, he died to save all men?

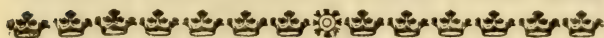
How contrary this notion of redemption is to Christ's intention, to scripture and reason, and with how many difficulties and inconsistencies it is attended, may, in part, appear by what goes before, wherein I have not, to my knowledge, strain'd or misrepresented any thing. But, on the other hand, if God loved, and Christ died for a select number only, and effectually secured to them grace and glory; this is agreeable to scripture and reason, advances the glory of the divine perfections, and provides most for the comfort and happiness of man, as I hope to make appear, in answer to our opponents allegations to the contrary, when I come to that part of my work.

Upon the whole, let the propositions which have been advanc'd, explain'd, and confirm'd by scripture, with the plain deductions from them, be seriously and impartially consider'd, and then let all judge whether Christ intended to redeem all men, or some only, when he gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.





S E R M O N III.



TIT. ii. 14.

Jesus Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.



HE death of Christ being the fountain of our life, there is nothing more necessary, pleasant, or useful to the Christian, than a right apprehension and remembrance of it: And therefore there is no doctrine of the Christian religion that has been more opposed and depraved than this; some denying
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ing that Christ, strictly speaking, died for any man, and others as confidently affirming, that he died for all men, with an intention to redeem and save all men; whereas my text represents him as dying for a peculiar people. Several arguments, establishing this truth, have been insisted on, in some former discourses on this text; I now proceed to the second thing I proposed.

II. I shall answer the principal arguments, and vindicate the chief passages of scripture, produced in opposition to the truth which I have been defending.

I. Our opponents endeavour to prove, from the general and universal scripture terms, that Christ did not die to redeem a select number only, but all men. And here they produce many texts, wherein it is said, that Christ died for the world, the whole world, for all men, and every man, and the like: And it must be own'd, that these words sound well on their side; and if they take them separately from the texts, and context, where they are used, and just in what sense they please, they may serve to make a flourish with, and may be a sufficient proof of the point, to such as look only to the surface, but not to the bottom of things, who more regard the sound, than the sense of the words, as

used in the respective places : But such as understand an argument, must know, that no certain conclusion can be drawn from doubtful premises ; nor can the general or universal terms prove universal redemption, till it is first proved that these terms are used in an universal sense, in the texts alleged : We deny that they are so used, and I hope to make it appear, that a restriction and limitation is annex'd to them, in the texts, or contexts, where they are used, with reference to our redemption by Christ.

Before we examine particular passages, let it be observed, that they ought all to be taken in such a sense, as agrees with the express end and design of Christ's death, and never in a sense contradictory thereto. Now the intention and design of Christ, in dying for men, is plainly expressed in the following scriptures ; " That he might sanctify and cleanse it, (the church) that he might present it to himself a glorious church ^a ;" " that he might purify to himself a peculiar people ^b ;" " that he might deliver us from this present evil world ^c ;" " that we might receive the adoption of sons ^d ;" " that we might be made the righteousness of God in him ^e ;" " that he might

^a Eph. v. 25.^d Chap. iv. 4, 5.^b Titus ii. 14.^e 2 Cor. v. 21.^c Gal. i. 4.

bring us to God ^f." It could not be the intention and design of Christ to extend redemption to such as are never purified, nor delivered from this evil world, nor receive the adoption of sons, nor are made the righteousness of God in him, nor are ever brought to God; for that would be either to have his intention disappointed, or to have intentions thwarting and contradicting one another: To suppose either of which, would be highly injurious to Christ: From hence it follows, that the largest expressions used in scripture, with relation to the extent of Christ's death, cannot be meant of all and every man, seeing Christ did not intend to sanctify every man, and bring every man to God; for if he had, he would certainly have done it; for he cannot fail in his work, nor be disappointed of his end.

(1.) A great noise is made about those scriptures which speak of Christ's dying for the world, or the whole world. Accordingly a late celebrated writer ^g, laying great stress upon the words, "the world," and "the whole world," tells us, that the word "world" is used almost an hundred times in St. John's writings, and that the sense which the word bears therein, must be esteemed, in reason, the proper import

^f 1 Pet. iii. 18.
p. 128.

^g Dr. Whitby on the Five Points,

of the word. But how if the word is used in great variety of senses by St. John? How shall we ever the more know the proper import of it, unless we find something in the text, or context, to determine the meaning of the word, in that particular place. If the word is used almost a hundred times in St. John's writings, yet I can find no more than nine places, in all his writings, in which the word "world" is applied to our redemption or salvation by Christ; and of these nine, there is not one text in which the word "world" can be proved to signify every person that has been, now is, or hereafter shall be, in this world; which yet is absolutely necessary, in order to prove, by such a text, that Christ gave himself to redeem all men, and every man. If then it can be proved, from any one verse in St. John's writings, or from any other text in scripture, that the words "world," or "whole world," must necessarily, when applied to the work of our redemption, signify every individual man, let our opponents enjoy their conclusion, that Christ died to redeem every man: But if this cannot be done, as I am confident it cannot, why should they, from general and doubtful terms, draw an universal and certain conclusion?

I do not deny that the word "world" is, by St. John, used in its utmost extent,

and includes in it not only all created persons, but also all created things ; as in that passage, “ The world was made by him ^h : ” But then it does not there relate to Christ’s work of redemption, but to his work of creation, and so can be no proof that Christ died to redeem all men. There are a great many places in St. John’s writings, and in the other parts of the New Testament, in which the word “ world ” is evidently used, in a restrictive, limited sense. It is said of Christ, that “ the world knew him not ⁱ : ” By the world here, as Chrysostom observes ^k, is meant the multitude of sinners, addicted to worldly things : For the friends of God, those venerable men, knew Christ, even before his incarnation : The patriarch Abraham, as Christ testifies, foresaw his coming : David, in Spirit, called him Lord : Moses spoke of him, and all the prophets from Samuel. I may add, when he came in the flesh, some believed in him, and his disciples beheld his glory, and yet the world knew him not ^l : By world here every individual person cannot be meant, seeing there were many that did know Christ : But why may not these words, “ The world knew him not,” as certainly prove, that no one man

^h John i. 10.
Hom. 7.

ⁱ Chap. i. 10.
^l John i. 12, 14.

^k In Joan. i.

in the world knew Christ, as those words, “ Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world ^m,” signify, that Christ died for all men; especially considering, that the sin of multitudes of men is never taken away from them; the world then, from whom sin is taken, cannot mean all mankind; for by taking away of sin, is meant the taking it wholly away, as Chrysostom ⁿ observes upon the place. When it is proved, that sin is thus taken from all men, we will allow that Christ died to redeem all men.

Christ said, “ I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me out of the world; they are not of the world, as I am not of the world ^o.” If there is a world, which Christ does not pray for, and yet a number is given him out of that world, for whom he prays, then the word “ world ” cannot mean all men, both those he did pray for, and those for whom he did not pray, those who are not of the world, and those that are. If then we must judge of the import of the word “ world,” by St. John’s writings; and if in those writings it is so often used in a restrictive sense, and never means all men, when applied to redemption, then no cer-

^m John i. 29.
9, 16.

ⁿ Hom. in loc.

^o John xvii.

tain, no apparent argument can be drawn from his use of the word, for the redemption of all men, or which proves that Christ gave himself to redeem and save all men.

Christ declared, that he would give his flesh for the life of the world^p, and that he gives life to the world^q: Seeing then Christ does not give life to all men, the world, to which he giveth life, does not mean all men; therefore no good argument can be drawn from this text for universal redemption.

Christ himself has told us, that “ God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life; for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world, through him, might be saved: He that believes not is condemned already: He that believes on the Son, has everlasting life, and he that believes not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him^r.” Those words, “ That whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” explain and limit God’s love and intention, in giving his Son to save the world, and like-

^p John vi. 51,
17, 18, 36.

^q Ver. 33.

^r Chap. iiii. 16,

wife serve, as a key, to let us into the meaning of the word "world," and of all that is here spoke of it; that God, out of infinite love, gave his only begotten Son to redeem and save all men, all the world over, who, in time, believe on him; but such as never believe on him, they are condemned already, they shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon them: And hence it follows, that they are no part of that world which God loved, which he sent his Son to save, and consequently that world does not, cannot include in it every individual person, that ever has been, now is, or hereafter shall be in the world; for so taken, it must include those who are condemned already, those who shall not see life, those who have the wrath of God abiding upon them. This would be to charge God with pursuing two contrary ends and designs, at the same time, his condemning many, whom yet he sent his Son not to condemn, but to save, and his intention of giving life to many, concerning whom he has declared, that they shall not see life, and his loving many, upon whom his wrath always abides, who, by nature, were children of wrath, and were never deliver'd from that wrath. This would be to make God act as absurdly as these men argue: Not only in the verses cited, but in those

that go before, Christ took care to explain the Father's intention, in sending the Son to redeem and save men, when he said; "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here is not one word of God's love to every man, or of his intention, that his Son should redeem and save every man.

All that our opponents have to plead here, is contained in one single word, and that of a very doubtful and different signification, even the word "world;" which, in the first chapter of John ¹, is evidently meant of but a part of mankind, and, for the reasons given, is so to be taken in the verses under present consideration. If our opponents deny this, and affirm, that the word "world" is, and must be, here meant of every man, it is incumbent on them to prove their assertion, and confute our reasons to the contrary; otherwise our assertion, that it means only some men, not all men, is as good a proof of our doctrine of particular redemption, as their bare assertion that the word "world" means all men, can be that Christ died to redeem all men. But we will be so gene-

¹ John iii. 14, 15.

² Chap. i. 10.

rous, as to give up the cause to them, if they can fairly, not from this chapter only, but from any other scripture, make it appear that the word "world," applied to our redemption and salvation by Christ, does, and must, evidently mean all mankind, without exception. And if they cannot, how vain are all their flourishes, and how impotent is all their declamation upon this word? Till this is done, they ought not to give themselves, or others, so much trouble about an ambiguous word, which is used in so many different senses in scripture.

It may be said, if the word "world" cannot be proved to signify all men, in any place relating to redemption, yet in all such places it includes the wicked and ungodly; as well as the good, and therefore it is equivalent to an universal; for if Christ died for the evil and for the good, he died for all men, seeing the whole species, or kind, is comprehended in this subdivision. To this I answer in general, God justifies the ungodly, and he justifies the godly; and therefore, according to this way of arguing, he justifies all men, which is both false and absurd to suppose: But, to be more particular, it is not true, that the word "world," in all those places relating to redemption, includes the finally wicked and ungodly.

Of Particular Redemption.

It is, indeed, boldly asserted^u; that the word “world” never signifies the elect only, in opposition to the wicked of the world, but still the wicked of the world, in opposition to the faithful Christians. We do not deny that Christ died for the ungodly, that when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son; nor can it be denied that Christ died for his sheep, for his church, for believers; but then we are to know that the ungodly man, and the enemy, for whom Christ died, is the same with the good man, the reconciled, the sheep, the believer: These different or contrary denominations point out not two different sorts of men, those who are saved, and those that perish, but two different states of the same persons, what they are by nature, and what they are by grace; what they were before conversion, enemies, wicked, and ungodly, and what they are at and after conversion, reconciled, believers, faithful, the church, and Christ’s sheep.

There are several places, relating to our redemption by Christ, where the word “world” is to be understood of the elect, or believers only: As “God sent his Son into the world, that, through him,

^u Dr. Whitby on the extent of Christ’s redemption, p. 133, 134.

the world might be saved ^x ;” but only believers are saved through Christ ; believers therefore are that world which Christ was sent to save : “ Christ gives life to the world ^y ;” but Christ gives life only to believers, and therefore believers only are that world, to which Christ gives life. “ God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them ^z :” But the world, to whom God does not impute their trespasses, are only believers, therefore only believers are meant by that world, which God was in Christ reconciling to himself. This last cited text does not barely exhibit to us the form of doctrine, which the ministers of reconciliation were to preach, but the matter of fact already done ; God had been atoned, by the sacrifice offered by his Son, for that world, to whom he does not impute their trespasses, but who are made the righteousness of God in him : Hence it is said, “ he was,” not “ he will be,” reconciling the world to himself.” And the apostle first asserts, that the reconciliation was made by Christ, and then tells us, that the ministry of this reconciliation was committed to him and his brethren.

^x John iii. 17.
^y 19.

^y Chap. vi. 33.

^z 2 Cor.

Augustine, in his dispute with the Donatists, explains the last cited scripture, as we have done ^a: “ They (the Donatists) will not consent (says he) that the church can be signified by the word “world,” contrary to the words of the apostle, “ God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself;” and contrary to the words of our Lord himself, who saith, “ The Son of man came not to judge the world, but that the world might be saved by him;” for the world could neither be reconciled to God, nor saved by him, unless by the word “ world” the church be understood, which only being reconciled to God, shall be saved by him.”

The apostle tells the Colossians, that the gospel was come into all the world, and brought forth fruit ^b: What can here be meant by all the world, but believers? For in others the gospel does not bring forth fruit, as it did in the Colossians. Other places might be produced, in which the word “ world” is to be understood of

^a Nolentes (Donistas) consentire mundi nomine ecclesiam posse significari, contra verba apostoli qui dixit, “ Deus erat in Christo mundum reconcilians sibi;” & contra ipsius verba Domini qui dixit, “ Non venit Filius hominis, ut mundum judicet, sed ut salvetur mundus per ipsum:” Neque enim reconciliari Deo & salvari per ipsam mundus potest; nisi mundi nomine intelligatur ecclesia, quæ sola per eum Deo reconciliata salvatur. August. contra Donatistas, Tom. VII. p. 403. Edit. Prob. 1528.

^b Coloss. i. 6.

the elect or believers only; but I cannot find one place in which the word "world," when used with relation to redemption, signifies those that perish, and much less such only. In answer to the objection, let it be observ'd farther, that supposing the word "world" always meant the wicked and ungodly, yet it cannot be proved that it means all the wicked, and all the ungodly, those who perish, as well as those who are saved, and consequently this mighty word "world" affords no solid argument for universal redemption. It is very remarkable, that though God is said to love the world, yet it is no where said, in scripture, that he loves all men; and though Christ is said to give his flesh for the life of the world, yet it is no where said that he gave his flesh for the life of all men, or of all mankind.

If the word "world" will not make out the point, our opponents think that universal redemption is fully proved by those words; "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world^c." It is not said he is the propitiation for our sins, and for the sins of every man, or of all mankind besides, that would have made the proof clear and decisive. But, before I come

^c 1 John i. 2.

to the particular answer to this allegation, let it be observed in general, that those words in the text, “ the whole world,” are evidently used in a limited restrictive sense : As the antithesis shews, “ and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world ;” so that there is a whole world besides those meant by the apostle, when he says, “ He is the propitiation for our sins,” his own, and those to whom he wrote. Our opponents therefore stumble at the threshold, and produce a text, which, at first sight, shews, that those big sounding words, “ the whole world,” do not, even in that place, signify all and every man in the world, but a part of it, distinguished from the rest, as has been already noted.

It is said ^d, that the words, “ the whole world,” never, in scripture, signify the elect only, in opposition to the wicked, in the whole world : To which I reply, that the words, “ all the world,” which are equivalent to “ the whole world,” are evidently used concerning the elect. The gospel was come into all the world, and brought forth fruit ^e : All the world in whom the gospel brought forth fruit, must here mean the elect, believers ; for in others

^d See Dr. Whitby on 1 John ii. 2.
i. 6.

^e Coloss.

it did not bring forth fruit. The apostle John said, "We are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness^f:" The whole world here evidently signifies the worse and wicked part of the world; and when it is said, "He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world," why may not the words denote the better part of the world, the elect, the church of God? We have as good a right, and greater reason, to affirm it, than others have to deny it.

[1.] The word "propitiation" seems to limit the expression to believers: "God has set forth his Son to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood." The word "propitiation," in scripture, never extends to any but believers, or refers to any others; so vain is the attempt, to apply it to all mankind, and thereby prove universal redemption.

[2.] The persons for whom Christ is said to be a propitiation, are those for whom he is an Advocate, or Intercessor; but he is not an Intercessor for all men, and therefore he was not a propitiation for the sins of all men, and consequently the apostle could not mean every individual man, when he said, that Christ was a propitiation for the sins of the whole world.

^f 1 John v. 19.

There is an inseparable connexion between the propitiation and the intercession : “ We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who also is the propitiation for our sins, yea, for the sins of the whole world ;” for the sins of all for whom he is an Advocate with the Father ; for his intercession is founded upon his sacrifice ; he suffered and satisfied for those for whom he interceeds, and therefore his intercession is effectual, or prevalent with God. This seems to be the sum and scope of the apostle’s reasoning ; and it very clearly points out whom he intends by the whole world, for whose sins Christ is said to be a propitiation.

[3.] The scope of the apostle is to comfort weak believers, under an over-bearing sense of their sinful infirmities. The argument he uses is, Christ’s pleading in heaven the virtue of that atoning sacrifice, which he had offer’d on earth, not only for their particular sins, but for the sins of all his people throughout the world : And a sacrifice of such virtue and extent, he intimates, would bear a sufficient plea for the remission of their sins. According to our doctrine, the apostle’s reasoning is just, and the consolation strong : But what comfort can it be to a poor dejected Christian, oppressed with his guilty fears, to tell him, that Christ loved and died for
all

all men alike; for Cain and Judas, as well as for any others; that there was a possibility of pardon and life procured for all, if they would believe and repent; this they must do of themselves, and when they have done it, they may fall from their faith into eternal perdition; and that this universal propitiation has neither purchased grace for unbelievers, nor perseverance for true believers, but left it to themselves, to believe and repent, and mortify sin, and secure eternal life by their own power? Is this the doctrine of the gospel? Is this strong consolation? May not the poor distressed soul say, Miserable comforters are you all? But God has, by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for him to lye, given strong, and much better consolation to the heirs of promise, who have fled for refuge to Christ, and have laid hold on the hope set before them ^s.

[4.] The words, "the whole world," are in scripture generally, if not always, used in a restrictive sense. A decree was made, that the whole world should be taxed, which whole world was no more than the whole Roman empire ⁿ. The devil is said to deceive the whole world ⁱ, and yet it was impossible that he should deceive the elect: Christ said to the church

^s Heb. vi. 18.

ⁿ Luke ii. 1.

ⁱ Rev. xii. 9.

in Philadelphia, “ I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon the whole world ^k.” The apostle Paul said to the believers at Rome, “ Your faith is spoke of throughout the whole world ^l,” and yet a great part of the world were dead before they believed. If then the whole world generally signifies but part of mankind, we demand a reason why it must mean every man, in the text under consideration.

[5.] The apostle John was a minister of the circumcision: At first he preached only to the Jews; they would allow the Gentiles, whom they called the world, no part with them in the great salvation; and it appears to have been a distinction much in use, at first, between Jew and Gentile; the former were called God’s people; the latter the world. Hence the falling of the Jews is said to be the riches of the world, or the Gentiles ^m. Accordingly St. John might, by the world, signify the Gentiles, and teach us, that all believers, among all nations, and not only among the Jews, had the benefit and comfort of Christ’s sacrifice and intercession.

[6.] It being agreed between us, that the apostle’s scope and design is to comfort believers, dejected with a sense of their

^k Rev. iii. 10.

^l Rom. i. 8.

^m Chap. xi. 12.

sins, the question is, which tends most to comfort them, the asserting that Christ procured a possible or conditional reconciliation for all men, or a certain and eternal redemption for a select and chosen number? To bring this debate to a short issue; when our opponents have spent their whole strength in asserting, and, as they think, proving, that Christ was the propitiation for the sins of all mankind, without exception, yet, at last, they are forced to own, that none but final believers shall obtain eternal life; and we constantly affirm, with the scripture, that all who believe in Christ shall be saved: Wherein, then, is their doctrine more comfortable than ours, or indeed so much? The comfort belongs only to believers, and to all such, whether Christ died to redeem all men, or some only: But those who hold the latter say, not only that such may, but that they shall believe. All that the Father has given Christ, shall come, and such as come, shall not be rejected, or fall from their faith and happinessⁿ; for Christ's sheep hear his voice, and follow him, and he gives them eternal life, and they shall never perish^o. On these accounts, and on others, that might have been added, we maintain, that there was

ⁿ John vi. 37.^o John x. 28.

no need to assert, that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of every man, conditionally, in order to believers comfort, seeing without that assertion their comfort is more effectually and sufficiently provided for : And, from all the forementioned reasons put together, we conclude, that God's chosen throughout the world, are the persons for whose sins Christ was a propitiation. Upon the whole, the scripture, when it speaks of the world of the redeemed, represents them by universal terms, but yet so as to mean the elect only. Which Prosper ^p elegantly expresses : “ In the elect and foreknown, and from all generality sever'd, a certain, special universality is supposed ; so as the whole world is freed out of the whole world, and all men seem to be redeemed from among all men.” “ Now also Christ was subject to the Father, yet not for all, but for believers in him only, for whom he offer'd himself to the Father, as the immaculate Lamb, that he might present us to his Father, freed from all sin ;” as Cyril of Alexandria ^q expresses it. This was the sense

^p In electis & praescitis, & ab omni generalitate discretis, specialis quaedam censetur universitas, ut de toto mundo totus mundus liberatus & de omnibus hominibus omnes homines videantur redempti. Prosp. de Vocat. Gent. Lib. I. cap. 3. vel in alia editione, cap. 9.

^q Subjectus nunc quoq; Christus Patri est, non tamen pro omnibus, sed pro solis credentibus in eum, pro quibus seipsum tanquam

sense of leading men in the church of God, after this point had been more attentively looked into and examined. Concerning which, some of the Ancients had expressed themselves with less care, before it came to be the subject of more close debate.

(2.) Our opponents insist much on several other general or universal terms used in scripture, which, as they think, prove universal redemption, or that Christ gave himself to redeem all, and every individual man. Here they urge the words “all,” “all men,” “every man,” with as much vehemence, and to as little purpose, as they had pleaded the words “world,” and “whole world,” in favour of their opinion. That they may not think themselves neglected, I shall cite the principal texts produced, with some short remarks upon them.

Before I enter upon the particular instances, let it be observed, that the word “all,” in many places, some^r say near five hundred, is used with limitation, and does not signify every individual person, or thing. Thus it is said, that Christ healed all that were sick^r, not all men who

tanquam immaculatum Agnum Patri obtulit ut ab omni peccato liberatos Patri offerret. Cyr. Alex. Tomo secundo, Lib. 10. Thesauri, cap. 8.

^r Dr. Owen of Redemption, p. 228.

^r Matt.

viii, 16.

lived

lived and died before he came in the flesh, or who lived at that time, but all that came or were brought to him. So Paul said, that he pleased all men, in all things^t; whereas he knew but a part of the world, and pleased but some of those he did know, and of them but few, if any, in all things. He also said, "All things are lawful to me^u;" What a horrid assertion would this be, strictly taken? God promised to pour out his Spirit on all flesh^w, not on every individual person, but upon some of all sorts, ages, and degrees. Prayers are to be made for all men, but not for the dead and damned^x, or those that have sinned to death^y. So, with relation to the resurrection, it is said, "In Christ all shall be made alive^z;" but not strictly every man, for a great number shall not die, and therefore cannot rise again^a. It shews a strong bias to an opinion for our adversaries to bring this text to prove universal redemption, which, when they have tortured it all they can, will never so much as prove an universal resurrection. The same may be said as to other texts they produce; however, let their allegations from scripture have a fair hearing.

^t 1 Cor. x. 33.^u Ver. 23.^w Acts ii. 17.^x 1 Tim. ii. 16.^y 1 John v. 6.^z 1 Cor. xv. 22.^a Ver. 51.

[1.] Our Lord Jesus Christ said; "I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to me^b." Now, say some, he who, by his death, draws all men to him, undoubtedly died for all men. But this text is ill chose as a witness for universal redemption, seeing Christ could not mean all men, and every man, by the all that he would draw to him; for he told the unbelieving Jews that they would not come to him^c; and at the very time when Christ spoke these words, there were multitudes in the prison of hell, who could never be drawn to him in any sense. A noted writer^d, on the other side, interprets the cited text of Christ's engaging many, throughout all the parts of the world, to believe in him: But how is that a proof of universal redemption? Chrysostome^e by "all," understands the Gentiles, and by Christ's drawing, understands his bringing men to believe. Now if it can be proved that Christ brings all men to believe on him, we shall readily allow, that he died, or was lifted up, to redeem all men.

[2.] It is said, by the apostle Paul, that "God has concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy on all^f:" By

^b John xii. 32.
Whitby on John x.i. 32.
^f Rom. xi. 32.

^c Chap. v. 40.

^d See Dr.

^e Vide Chrysost. in loc.

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“all,” Jews and Gentiles are here meant ; not as to a strict universality, for so taken, God has not mercy, saving mercy on all, but upon some of them only. There is severity exercised towards the unbelieving Jews ^g ; and the apostle’s highest aim was to save some of them ^h, which makes it very plain, that not all the Jews, much less all men, strictly taken, are meant by the “all,” which the scripture says God would have mercy upon.

[3.] Our opponents urge that scripture, “As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation ; so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life ⁱ.” It is observed^k, that the apostle is comparing the condemnation, which was procured by the sin of Adam, with the free gift of justification, procured by the second Adam, as to the extent of persons concern’d in both.” Be it so ; Adam brought condemnation and death upon all his seed, so Christ brought justification and eternal life upon all his seed : All men, in the ordinary course of generation, are the seed of the first Adam ; but all men, so taken, are not the seed of the second Adam ; for the redeemed are a peculiar people, selected

^g Rom. xi. 22.

^h Ver. 14.

ⁱ Chap. v. 18.

^k Dr. Whitby on the Five Points, p. 117.

out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ¹: And yet they may be said to be all men, in a federal sense, or all men given him by the Father, or all who, in time, believe on him. Thus the apostle himself states the comparison, in these words; “As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive: But every man in his own order; Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ’s at his coming ^m.” It appears, from hence, that death, by the first Adam, and life by the second Adam, follow union with either of them; all in the first Adam sinned, and die in and with him; all in Christ, the second Adam, who are said to be his, in distinction from others who are not his, shall be made alive, shall rise, and live with him for ever. There is, then, an “all,” which is restrain’d to them that are Christ’s; but such a distinction, or limitation, had been not only impertinent, but false, if all men were in him, or if justification of life was procured for, and offer’d to all men by Christ, as our adversaries explain it ⁿ. In a few words, we readily allow, that Christ died to redeem all those men upon whom the free gift comes to justification of life, in the same

¹ Rev. v. 9.
Dr. Whitby ubi sup.

^m 1 Cor. xv. 22, 23.

ⁿ See

sense, as by Adam's offence judgment came upon all men to condemnation; that is, if all men are actually justified by Christ, and have the sentence of eternal life to pass upon them, then we must allow that Christ died to redeem and save all men; and till that be proved, the scripture in debate between us will be of little service to the cause of universal redemption. To say that the same "all" that died, and were condemned, in and with the first Adam, are justified, and live in and with the second Adam, is to beg the question, and to leave the devils no company in hell.

[4.] Another text pleaded in favour of universal redemption, is this; "If one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again °." Our opponents^p argue, from this text, that those words, "All were dead," must certainly be taken in their greatest latitude, wherefore the words preceding, "Christ died for all," from which they are an inference, ought also to be taken in the same extent. Now, to clear the sense of the text, let us consider,

° 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.
Points, p. 119.

^p See Dr. Whitby on the Five

1.) The apostle's scope and design is to shew how we are constrained and obliged to live to Christ, and not to our selves, and therefore every passage is to be interpreted so as may best agree with his design. Now if we understand these words, "All were dead," of a being dead in sin, what argument do they afford for our living to Christ? All were dead in sin, therefore we are bound to live to Christ; where is the force of the reasoning? But if we interpret the words not of a being dead in sin, but of our being dead to sin, as it is elsewhere ^a explained, then the reasoning is strong, but the argument for universal redemption is lost; for all men are not dead to sin; and if those who are, or shall be so dead, are the all for whom Christ died, then by that "all," all mankind cannot be intended. Even some ^r of the other side themselves, by the all that were dead, understand not all who were dead in sin, but all who are dead to sin, by virtue of Christ's death: "All ought to die," namely, to sin. The sense is the same with that in the beginning of the sixth

^a Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroy'd, that henceforth we should not serve sin, Rom. vi. 6. who his own self bore our sins in his own body upon the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness, 1 Pet. ii. 24.

^r Grotius & Vorstius. Vide Poli Synop. Crit. in loc.

chapter of the epistle to the Romans, tho' more briefly expressed. According to the the apostle understands all Christians, in whom the efficacy of the death of Christ exerts it self; so far as they, by the example of Christ, are dead to sin and the flesh, says another, upon those words, "Then all were dead."

2.) The extent of the all who were dead, is to be taken from the all Christ died for. The apostle affirms so many to be dead as Christ died for, not that Christ died for so many as were dead. If one died for all, for all whom he loved, and for whom he rose again, then all those persons were dead, they died with Christ; the old man was crucified with him; they, by Christ's cross, became dead to sin, that they might no longer live therein: But is this the effect of the death of Christ upon all men, or upon some only? Let this determine who the all men are, for whom Christ died.

It may be objected, that there seems to be a manifest distinction between the all whom Christ died for, and who were dead, and those who, by virtue of Christ's death, live; whereas if being dead to sin was the thing intended, then if it is not the same thing, yet it would belong to all the same persons, and at the same time, to be dead, and to live; for the death of sin, and the
life

life of grace, are of the same date, or commence at the same time, and extend to all the same persons : The words in the text lie thus ; “ And that he died for all, that henceforth they that live,” implying, that all those do not live for whom Christ died, but that such of them as do live, are bound to live to Christ, and not to themselves. I must say, that the objection is set in a strong light, and, at first sight, carries in it something very plausible and engaging ; but yet I hope to make it appear not to be the sense of the text. The apostle here, as he often does elsewhere ^f, and as we commonly do, uses an elliptical sort of speech, as appears from that passage, “ And that he died for all.” To make which clear and full, we must add those words, “ We thus judge, that he died for all, that henceforth they that live should not live to themselves ;” where is understood that the “ all ” who were dead to sin, by the cross of Christ, at the same time, received a principle of spiritual life, which was to be improved in living to Christ ; so that by all that were dead, and those that live, the apostle means

^f What the law could not do in that it was weak thro’ our flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh (he did) that the righteousness, &c. Rom. viii. 3. So Chap. v. 18. As by the offence of one (we supply, judgment came) upon all men to condemnation.

the same persons, though he does not take up time to say, we thus judge, that all died to sin in Christ, and all, at the same time, live in him by faith, and, from that very moment, are bound to live to Christ in newness of life. It was taken for granted, by the apostle, that men could not be dead to sin, but, at the same time, they must live in Christ; “for without him we can do nothing”¹; and therefore, without explaining all this, he describes the same persons, who were, in one sense, dead, to be, in another sense, alive, and bound to use that life, in obeying and glorifying Christ: The word “henceforth” favours this sense; “Then were all dead, that henceforth they who live, should not live to themselves, but to Christ.” What kind of reasoning would it be to say, that Christ died for all that were dead in sins, that henceforth among all that were dead in sins, those who live, should not live to themselves: But to say all were dead to sin, by the death of Christ, that henceforth, or from that very time, they should not live to themselves, but to Christ, who died for them, and rose again, is good and strong reasoning, and of a gospel strain. I think, the argument runs clear and strong, if we apprehend the apostle thus

¹ John xv. 5.

speaking: "In persuading men to fly from the wrath to come, and receive Christ, we feel the constraining influences of his love, in dying for his people, and engaging them all to die to sin, and live to himself." If this is the genuine sense of the text, as I take it to be, the force of the objection is taken off at once; and, I hope, more need not be said in answer to it.

3.) The all for whom Christ is said to die ^u, are those very persons for whose justification he rose again. I ask then, did Christ rise again for the justification of all men? If not, then all mankind are not meant by the all for whom Christ died.

4.) The all for whom Christ died, are new creatures ^w, their sins are not imputed to them, and they are actually reconciled to God ^x, and they are made the righteousness of God in Christ ^y: But this is not the case of all men in the world, but of all the elect, all believers; and hence it follows, that the all for whom Christ died, are not all men, that ever were, are, or shall be, and consequently that from this text it cannot be proved that Christ died for all mankind.

^u Rom. iv. 24.

^w Ver. 17.

^x Ver. 19.

^y Ver. 21.

[5.] Another text alledged in favour of universal redemption, is this which follows; “Who will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time².” Our opponents think the cited words to be a clear declaration of the intention both of the Father and the Son, relating to man’s redemption; of the Father it is said, that he would have all men to be saved; and concerning the Son, that he gave himself a ransom for all; and hence they conclude, that Christ died for all and every man. In vindication of this scripture, and in answer to the argument drawn from it, let it be observed,

I. That the whole force of the argument depends upon the sense of the word “all,” which, in the very context, is used in a limited and restrained sense, and can never be proved to be used in its largest sense, in the text under consideration. A little before it is said, that supplications and prayers are to be made for all men, for kings, and for all in authority³; now are we here, by “all men,” to understand every man? Are Christians to pray for the dead, as well as the living; for the damned in hell, or the glorified in heaven; for those un-

² 1 Tim. ii. 4, 6.

³ Ver. 1.

born and unknown. In the same place it is said, that thanks are to be made to God for all men ; what, for Judas, Cain, and Anti-christ, and all who are suffering the vengeance of eternal fire ? If all men to be pray'd for, and for whom thanks are to be given, mean only some men of all ranks and nations, especially those who have it in their power to do more good or harm than others, as publick magistrates, and the like ; then by the " all men," whom God would have to be saved, and for whom Christ is a ransom, may be meant only some men, some of all sorts, ranks, and conditions, which are to be pray'd for, seeing God has now enlarged the pale of the church, the Gentiles flowing into it. The will of God that men should come to the knowledge of the truth, and that they should be saved, is equally extensive ; for they are joined together, without any the least distinction, or sign of difference between them. " God will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth : " All then to whom God does not grant the means of coming to the knowledge of the truth, are excluded from the all, whom God will have to be saved, and for whom Christ gave himself a ransom.

2.) The will of God here must mean either God's signification of what he requires

quires men to do, or a declaration of what he himself will certainly do. Where-ever God's word comes, he requires all men to repent; but the event shews that he does not give repentance to all men, or work it in them^b. He commanded Pharaoh to let Israel go, and yet foretold that he would harden Pharaoh's heart, so as he should not hearken^c; where there is a very plain distinction between God's secret and his revealed will, between what he calls man to do, and what he will do himself. The same appears in the case of Abraham's offering up his son Isaac, and in many others. When, in the text under consideration, it is said, that God will have all men to be saved, the meaning may be, that he requires all men, to whom he sends his word, to seek salvation. Some^d observe, that it is not said that God will save all men, as expressing the certainty of what he will do, but he will have all men to be saved, as expressing the duty of all men to seek salvation. If by the will of

^b As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. It doth not hence follow, that God would have all men, even the wicked saved, but only that he takes pleasure in the conversion and salvation of the wicked, as the last clause explains it; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.

^c Exod. vii. 2, 3, 4.

^d Vide Bistert. contra Crell.

God is meant in the text the good pleasure of his will, or the good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself^e; then all mankind cannot be meant, by the all whom God will have to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth; seeing God works all things according to the counsel of his own will^f; but God does not actually save all men; yet his counsel shall stand^g, and he will do all his pleasure, in the hosts of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth^h; who has resisted his will, or who can do itⁱ? Now this is the will of God, that of all whom he gave to Christ, he should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day^k. If then it was the will of God that all mankind should be saved, all mankind would actually be saved; and if all are not actually saved from sin and wrath, then the text in debate cannot mean that God will have every individual person to be saved, and consequently that Christ's giving himself a ransom for all, cannot mean all mankind, but the all given him by the Father; for, as he said, he came down from heaven to do the will of him that sent him^l.

^e Eph. i. 5, 9.

^f Ver. 11.

^g Isai. xlv. 10.

^h Dan. iv. 35.

ⁱ Rom. ix. 19.

^k John vi. 39.

^l John vi. 38, 39.

It may be said, God willed the salvation of all men conditionally, or if they will be saved. To this I answer; for God to will the salvation of all men, if they will, is not to will it at all, for all men might have rejected it. Nothing can be affirm'd certainly of such a will of God, as depends upon the uncertain will of the creature. If all men will be saved, then God wills the salvation of all men; if no man will be saved, then God wills the salvation of no man: He has no will of his own who must be determined by the will of another, and that other is not determined by his will. This notion represents God as saying, I will that every individual person should be saved; nevertheless, not as I will, but as they will. Is not this to make the will of God mutable and uncertain? And, on this supposition, what becomes of the immutability of his counsel^m; or how does he work all things according to the counsel of his own willⁿ? Is not this evidently to dethrone God, and set up man in his room?

3.) The will of God, that all men should be saved, is commensurate to his will, that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth; but it is not his will that all men should come to the know-

^m Heb. vi. 17.

ⁿ Ephes. i. 11.

ledge of the truth ; for to some he does not give a capacity to know it, as ideots^o, mad men : And to others^p he does not give, yea, he actually with-holds, the means of coming to the knowledge of the truth^q ; and some he gives over to strong delusions, to believe a lye, that they may be damned^r ; therefore he does not will that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth, or that all mankind should be saved.

It gives us a very ill representation of God to say, that he willed the salvation of all men if they will, when he well knew that multitudes never would choose or desire salvation from sin and wrath, and that he never would make them willing, by his own gracious power ; for this is trifling with men, in a matter of the highest importance, and a pretending that love towards them, which had no reality in it, and could be no more than a delusive shew and appearance of it. From what has been said, I think, it may clearly appear, that the scripture which has been so largely consider'd, does not prove that Christ died to redeem and save all men.

[6.] It is urged, that Christ tasted death for every man^s ; and our opponents make a mighty flourish with this text, and would

^o Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20. ^p Acts xvi. 6, 7. ^q Chap. xvii. 30. ^r 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12. ^s Heb. ii. 9.

have us believe that it concludes clearly and strongly on their side. In answer to this, let it be consider'd, that the word "man" is not in the Greek text, though if it had, it would have given little or no strength to their argument; for, in reason, it must have been explain'd agreeably to the context, Christ tasted death for all men^u, or every man, who is one of the many sons to be brought to glory, and of whose salvation he is the Captain; Every man that is his brother, and is sanctified by him^w; every man who is one of the children whom God had given him^x; every man who, by his death, is deliver'd from eternal death^y; every man that is reconciled by his death. But this is not the lot of all men in the world; and therefore when it is said, that Christ tasted death for every man, the apostle does not mean that he died to redeem and save all mankind.

It may be said, tho' the words "world," "whole world," and "all," may admit of a restriction, and not always signify all mankind, yet the words "every man," seem so very full and express, that there is no room to evade the force of this testimony for universal redemption. To which

^u Heb. ii. 10.
^y Ver. 17.

^w Ver. 11.

^x Ver. 13.

I reply, that these very words, "every man," are elsewhere used in a restrictive and limited sense, and therefore may be so in the cited scripture. The apostle says; "Warning every man, and teaching every man^z:" "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man, to profit with^a:" Nay, Christ said, "Go preach the gospel to every creature^b:" Not to birds or beasts, or every man that has been, then was, or should be, upon the face of the earth, but generally and without distinction, as to nation or rank, to as many as they could, where-ever they came. No argument, therefore, can be drawn, for the certain meaning of the words, "every man," as signifying every man that ever was, now is, or hereafter shall be, seeing they are so often taken in a limited sense, and, according to the context, are so to be understood, in the scripture alledged.

[7.] Another text produced in favour of universal redemption, is the following; "He is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe^c." According to our opponents, Christ is the Saviour of all men, as to impetration or purchase, and the Saviour of believers, as to their actual

^z Colos. i. 28.

^a 1 Cor. xii. 7.

^b Mark xvi. 15.

^c 1 Tim. iv. 10.

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possession and enjoyment of salvation. But here are several things to be proved before this text will establish the doctrine of universal redemption, which, I believe, will never be done.

1.) It should be demonstrated, that the Saviour here spoke of is Jesus Christ: There is not a syllable in the text to cause us to think so. The Saviour here spoke of is said to be the living God, a title not appropriated to Christ, though he is not excluded from it, but is, on other occasions, so called; and it may be used of God indefinitely, who is the Hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof in times of trouble^d.

2.) It should be proved, that the salvation here signified is spiritual and eternal salvation; whereas, to an impartial judge, it must rather appear to be meant of a temporal and providential salvation: The context, I think, carries it evidently this way, if we read the words in their connexion; "Therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe;" or we trust in the living God for support and preservation, in the labours, and under the reproaches, which our preaching

^d Jer. xiv. 8.

the gospel occasions; and we have this trust in God, because he is the Preserver of all men, and especially of his own people; for godliness has the promise of this life, and also of that to come, and therefore he will preserve us here, so far as he sees fit: And it is to be remember'd, that Paul had a particular intimation of this, when he first received his commission from Christ, who said, "I will appear to thee, delivering thee from the people and the Gentiles, to whom now I send thee." Now what relation has this to universal redemption? I have often wonder'd, how men of ingenuity and learning could lay such a stress upon this text, which is nothing to their purpose, even allowing, though I will only suppose, the opinion of some of the ancient writers to be true, that the word Saviour means Preserver, as it refers to all men, and eternal salvation, as it refers to believers; for even in that way it makes nothing for universal redemption. It is said, that Chrysostom, OEcumenius, Primasius, and Ambrose^f, came into this last interpretation, so did Thomas Aquinas, and others; but I must freely own, that the former explanation of the text seems more solid, pertinent, and evidently just and true.

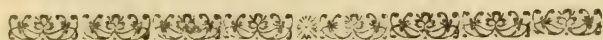
^e Acts xxvi. 17.^f Vide Turret. Institut. p. 2, 501.

3.) Before this text can establish universal redemption, it must be proved, that there is an actual universal salvation ; for the text does not say that God may be, by virtue of certain remote conditions and possibilities, the Saviour of all men, but, in that sense in which he is the Saviour of all men, he actually is so at present. Now if it can be proved, that all mankind are actually saved from sin, death and hell, the dispute is at an end at once ; and with what joy shall we come over to the tents of our opponents ?

4.) I cannot see how they will be able to draw a possible conditional salvation out of those words, “ especially of those that believe ;” and as to the other part of the verse, there is nothing that looks like it. Upon the whole I conclude, that the text yields no support to the doctrine of universal redemption. Our opponents have other arguments, from reason, to offer, and some objections against our doctrine to make ; the consideration of which will be the subject of my next and last discourse.



S E R M O N IV.



TIT. ii. 14.

Jesus Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.



HAVING, in some former discourses, offer'd several arguments in defence of the doctrine of particular election, in my last on this subject I made an entrance upon the consideration of the arguments produced by our opponents, in favour of the notion of Christ's dying for all men ; and I went through the objection against our doctrine,

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which is built on the general terms used in scripture; such as the world, the whole world, all men, and every man. I shall now examine some other objections, which are made to our opinion. Therefore,

2. I shall proceed to another set of objections, which are brought against the doctrine of particular redemption, and which the enemies of it have always in their mouths, and make a great noise with. They pretend, that the opinion of Christ's dying for a certain determinate number, is inconsistent with the general calls which are given in scripture, to all men, to believe and repent, that it detracts from the goodness and grace of God, and from the merit of Christ; that it represents God as partial or unjust to his creatures, and that it takes away all comfort from poor sinners. These things sound plausibly; but if the objections are severally and distinctly examined, they will appear to be of no weight.

(1.) The patrons of universal redemption often tell us, that all men are, in scripture, called to repent and believe, therefore Christ died to save and redeem all men. It is pleaded, that ^a John the Baptist came to bear witness to Christ, that all men through him might believe;

^a John i. 7.

that ^b the apostles were to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; and every individual that would believe, and be baptized, was to be saved; that ^c the Holy Spirit was to come and convince the world of sin, because they believed not in Christ; and that ^d the apostle Paul, in his speech to the Athenians, declared that God commanded all men every where to repent.

These allegations may be thought to have a great deal in them, by such as are taken with the bare sound of words, without considering their meaning; but it is a sufficient answer if we say, that seeing multitudes in the world have not enjoy'd the scriptures, nor the preaching of the gospel, it is evident that all men, strictly and absolutely speaking, have not been called to believe and repent. All the men to whom the ministry of John the Baptist extended, were far from being all men in the world; for there were multitudes dead before he was born, multitudes in his time who never heard him, and multitudes since who never knew any thing of his witness or testimony; therefore all the men that might or should be influenced by his ministry to believe, could not be meant

^b Mark xvi. 15, 16.
xvii. 30.

^c John xvi. 8.

^d Acts

of all the individual men in the world. The apostles going into all the world, and preaching the gospel to every creature, must not be interpreted of all the individuals of mankind, in their day, much less of all the sons and daughters of Adam ; for then they neither did nor could fulfil their commission : And the next branch of the cited scripture, “ He that believes shall be saved,” is rather an epitome of the gospel, which they were to preach, wherever they came, than a command to all men to believe : Besides, we may understand the words, as declaring the certain connexion between faith and salvation, which makes nothing against the doctrine of particular redemption. Christ said, that the Holy Ghost should, when he came, reprove the world of sin, because they believed not on him ; but the world he was so to convince cannot be understood of all men, or every individual man, seeing millions were dead long before that time. The apostle declared, that “ God now commands all men everywhere to repent ;” but the words imply that he did not always do it ; “ The times of ignorance God winked at :” But now, by diffusing the light of his word among the Heathen world, he more generally called men off from their idolatries, to the knowledge and worship of the true God. Every individual

dual man in the world cannot therefore be comprehended in the apostle's expressions. If we suppose all men, strictly speaking, were called to believe, we must enquire what it is that they are called to believe: To say it is that Christ died for them, is to take for granted the thing in question, whether he died for all men: To believe that Christ is the true and only Saviour, and to receive him, and depend upon him for salvation, as revealed in the gospel, is that faith which men are called to by the preaching of the gospel, and which has the promise of eternal life annexed to it; but this does not necessarily suppose that Christ died for all men.

There is a sufficient ground to preach the gospel to all, and for any person who hears it to hearken to the call of the gospel, seeing there are many that shall be saved. It would not be thought unreasonable to urge all husbandmen to plough and sow their lands, or all merchants to send their effects abroad, because all of the one sort shall not have good crops, nor will all of the other sort have good returns: It is sufficient to put them upon action, that some, nay, many, have. Ministers are compared to sowers^e, and they, as well as husbandmen, are^f in the morning to sow their seed,

^e *Matt. xiii. 7.*^f *Eccles. xi. 6.*

and in the evening not to with-hold their hand, not knowing whether shall prosper, this or that. There are three things which lay a sufficient foundation for ministers to call all their hearers to believe, and for any of them to hearken to the call: One thing is, Christ's ability ^e to save, to the uttermost, all who come to God by him: Another thing is, God's command ^h, that men believe in Christ; this is the work of God ⁱ, that which he requires, and that which he is pleased with: Besides these, there is the gracious declaration and assurance; "That whosoever believes shall not perish; and that Christ will in no wise cast out him that comes to him ^k." Upon these grounds, the apostles pressed men to believe in Christ ^l, and preached to them forgiveness of sins, through faith in his blood; for so God has set him forth to be a Propitiation ^m.

The gospel declares Christ's ability to save all that come to him, that all shall be saved who do believe in him, that it is the command of God that men believe, and that such as do not must perish. Here is warrant enough for ministers to preach Christ to all, and encourage all their hearers

^e Heb. vii. 25. ^h 1 John iii. 23. ⁱ John vi. 29.
^k John iii. 16. John vi. 37. ^l Acts xiii. 38. ^m Rom.
 iii. 25.

to believe on him. If they could truly tell men that Christ died for all men, yet they could not tell them that any more should be saved, than actually believe; and it is certain that all who believe shall be saved. It is not my knowledge that Christ died for me, that is the ground of my believing in him, but the command of God requiring it, and the declaration, that whosoever does so, shall have eternal life. Upon this, I have not only a liberty and encouragement to believe, when the gospel is preached to me, but it is my duty so to do. In the olympic games ⁿ, there were many run, though but one received the prize; but in the case before us, not barely one, but all who believe shall be saved; and therefore when the man put the question to Christ, whether there are few that are saved? he bid ^o him strive to enter in at the strait gate, because many would seek to enter in, and not be able.

The gospel is the power of God to salvation to every one that believes; and seeing no man, who enjoys the gospel, can know that he is excluded, but by final impenitence and unbelief, all men to whom the gospel is preached, have the same outward call, and encouragements to believe, as all the saved have had. It was not per-

ⁿ 1 Cor. ix. 24;

^o Luke xiii. 23, 24.

sonally made known to them before hand, that God had chose, or that Christ died for them in particular; but the general declarations and promises of the gospel were set before them; Christ's ability and willingness to save lost sinners, were represented to them; and the Holy Spirit enabling them to believe these things, and to embrace Christ, as he is declared in the gospel, the promise of the Redeemer, the salvation, became theirs: And any person now treading in the steps of their faith, shall be a fellow-heir with them of the same happiness.

If these things be duly consider'd, it will appear, that there is sufficient ground to call all men to believe, and for every hearer of the gospel to seek faith, without the person's knowing before-hand that Christ died for him in particular. Nor can I see how the knowledge of that, if it could be had, by an unbeliever, would help him; seeing those who say Christ died for all, yet allow, that many, even of those to whom he is preached, perish; yea, many who have truly believed. And it is granted on all hands, that without true faith and repentance, there is no salvation. They who affirm that Christ died for all men, generally say, that he did not procure them faith, nor undertake that they should certainly exert their own natu-
ral

ral power to believe, which they are supposed to have: Wherein then are they better than others, or so well as those who are waiting at the pool side, till the Spirit moves upon the waters of the sanctuary? which he will do, and make it not only possible, but certain, that some, yea, many, shall be saved; and every one is to wait and hope, upon these reasons and grounds, that he stands as fair for salvation as others; and should be sensible, that whether Christ died for all, or only some, yet it is certain, that without faith he cannot be saved; that it is folly and wickedness to make his misery certain, because his happiness is to him at present uncertain; and, upon the whole, that it is good for a man both to hope, and quietly to wait, for the salvation of the Lord.

I might further answer to the objection, that the calling all who hear the gospel to believe, is the way to manifest the wickedness of men, and make it appear, that their destruction is of themselves, if they neglect or refuse this salvation; seeing whether Christ died for all, or for some only, yet they can no otherwise know that they have no part in it: Seeing it is very plain, and what all, who understand and preach the gospel, must, and do tell the people, that whosoever believes shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

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If it should be said, if all men who hear the gospel are bound to believe that they shall or may be saved by Christ, then multitudes are bound to believe a lye, if Christ did not die for all men, seeing then all men cannot be saved by Christ. To this I would answer, that to believe that all men, who have faith in Christ, shall be saved, is no lye, but a plain certain truth; and it is as evidently false, that any man is bound to believe that he shall or can be saved without faith in Christ: Therefore, tho' Christ died for some only, no man who, under the gospel, is called to believe, is required to believe a lye; for all who do believe on Christ shall be saved. Besides, the first thing which a man under the gospel is called to believe, is not that he shall be saved by Christ, but that there is salvation in no other; and that if he truly receives Christ by faith, he shall be saved, but not otherwise.

(2.) It is pretended that the doctrine of particular redemption detracts from the goodness and grace of God, and the merits of Christ, and therefore it cannot be true. To this I answer, that the goodness and grace of God, and the merits of Christ, are more magnified and advantaged by the doctrine of particular redemption, than by the doctrine of universal redemption.

It does not honour the divine goodness and grace for God to leave all men open, not only to a possibility, but even a great probability of perishing, notwithstanding all that he has done to save them; and yet so it is, according to them who say, he gave Christ to die for all men, but only to render their salvation possible. That love and goodness which secures salvation to some, though a smaller number, must be greater than that love and goodness, which provides only a remote possibility for all. It seems to shew a great coldness and indifference, to leave it a second time to the mutable will of man, to secure his salvation, when man's will, in its best condition, had ruined Adam, and all his posterity. Might it not well have been thought, that if infinite love and goodness was shew'd to all men, as it gave Christ to die for them, so it should give the Holy Spirit to apply salvation to them, to make them willing to embrace it, and fix their adherence to it?

The scriptures ^p set forth the kindness and love of God in the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. The apostle said, " God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, has quicken'd us toge-

^p Tit. iii. 4, 5.

ther with Christ^a." But how does this great love and mercy towards man appear, in giving Christ for all men, only to make it possible that they may be saved, and then leave the far greater part of them for ever ignorant of the way of salvation, and multitudes who do know it, yea, all of them, to perish in their sins, if they do not of their own free wills, without any preventing grace, procured by Christ, or secured to them by the Father, make sure of this salvation? Is this the way to exalt the grace of God, and the merits of Christ; not to procure a certainty, but only a remote possibility of salvation for men?

If Christ died for all men, and yet leaves many of them, to aggravate their guilt, in rejecting such a Saviour, when it was known to God, before he gave Christ for them, what they would do, surely it would have been more favour to them, not to have given Christ to die for them, than after that, to leave them to sink the deeper into misery, under the guilt of denying the Lord, who bought them, as some affirm. It must surely torment the poor creatures abundantly the more, to think that when Christ had open'd a door of salvation for them, no kind hand would be so merciful as to lay hold on them and draw them in.

^a Eph. ii. 4, 5.

Is it not an unworthy representation of the God of love to say, that though he seem'd to love all men, so as to send Christ to die for them, yet he loved them so little, as to leave them all to perish, if they would, notwithstanding? I may here argue as the apostle did in a lower case, when he said, "Whoso has this world's goods, and sees his brother have need, and shuts up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him?" In like manner I may say, if God shewed such infinite goodness and love to all men, in giving Christ to die for them, how was it, that when he saw their need of his Spirit and grace, and the means of grace, he should shut up his bowels of compassion from them, leave them to themselves, and never so much as send the Gospel to thousands of them?

In a few words, it does not appear to discover more, or so much grace and goodness in God, to take a distant and remote step towards the salvation of all, in giving Christ to make it possible, as in giving Christ, grace and glory certainly to some, yea to a number, that no man can number, and to say, that Christ died for all men, not to purchase grace and glory for them, but only to render their salvation

^r 1 John iii. 7.

possible, is to depreciate, not exalt the merits of Christ; for this is to say, that he so merited salvation, as that salvation is secured to no man; for what is only possible may never be. And if Christ by his death procured a possibility of salvation, he only removed the insuperable obstruction, that so man might become his own saviour, which is to exalt the goodness and power of the creature, and not the merit and grace of Christ. On the other hand, that grace must be infinite which gave Christ to procure, and secure eternal life, for a vast multitude of poor perishing sinners. And that merit must be infinite, which not only paid their vast debt to justice, but also purchased for them an inconceivable and eternal weight of glory.

Thus, I think, it appears, that the doctrine of particular redemption does not detract from the goodness and grace of God, or the merits of Christ, but that the charge falls justly and very heavy upon the contrary opinion.

(3) It is confidently objected, that it represents God as partial, if not unjust, towards his creatures, if when they were all in the same condition, he provided a remedy, a redeemer and saviour for some, and not for others; and the same may be said of Christ; for why should not all in a like

condition be alike dealt withal? I answer, That if God may make no difference between his creatures, in the same condition, then he must either provide a saviour for all sinful creatures, or for none; and then why was there no saviour provided for devils as well as for men? Are they not God's creatures, yea creatures of a more noble kind than man? Are they not sinful and miserable creatures, who needed a saviour as well as man? Why then are they passed by? Why did not Christ take their nature, and die for them, as well as for mankind? And if there was no blame or partiality in redeeming men, and not devils, why should it be thought a reflection upon God, to send his Son to redeem some men and not others? Where many have a just and equal claim to any benefit, there the giving it to one, and with-holding it from others of them, is unjust and dishonourable; but when none of them have any just claim to it, but all have deserved the contrary, there the case is far otherwise. Where many have deserved punishment, and some are exempted from it, without any satisfaction to the law, whilst others are made to suffer the law, there lies a charge of unjust partiality; but this is not the case before us; though God exempts that particular number from condemnation, for whom Christ died, yet it is

upon satisfaction made by their surety and saviour, and in punishing the rest he does them no wrong, for he inflicts upon them nothing but what is the proper desert, and the due wages of sin.

God in his word has vindicated this right of sovereignty to himself, to bestow his favours upon whom he will; as in this passage, "Who art thou, O man! that repliest against God? Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel to honour and another to dishonour^f?" The objection of partiality proceeds from the pride and envy of man, as Christ inform'd us, when he said; "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good^g?" We see in the daily distributions of providence a great inequality; some are rich, others poor, some healthy, others very sickly; some born deform'd, others well shap'd; some wonderfully preserv'd, others expos'd to many perils; some have the clear light of the Gospel, and millions know nothing of Christ; and, shall not God be just, because he is thus partial?

(4.) It is objected, that the doctrine of particular Redemption takes away all comfort from poor sinners, therefore it is not true. To this I answer, that the word of

^f Rom. ix. 20, 21.

^g Matt. xx. 15.

God affords no comfort to sinners, whilst they remain in impenitency and unbelief. "There is no peace, saith the Lord, to the wicked^u: He that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him^w: Except you repent you shall all likewise perish^x." Supposing Christ did die for all men, yet that can yield no comfort to a man that lies under the wrath and curse of God.

Those who say, that Christ died for all men, do not say, that all men shall be saved, or that it is so much as probable that they should. They do not suppose, that Christ is engaged, by any special love, or covenant, to save any man, who enjoys the gospel, any more than those who never enjoy it, or those who are in hell. Nor do they pretend to say, that all, or the greater part of such as enjoy the gospel, will believe and be saved; and if they do not, what comfort can it afford men to think, that Christ died for all men, when if it is so, that will but aggravate their condemnation and misery, as rejecters of Christ and his salvation?

All who believe and repent have the greatest grounds of joy and comfort, tho' Christ died to redeem and save some men only: This is strong consolation for all the heirs

^u Isa. xlviii. 22.^w John iii. 36.^x Luke xiii. 30.

of promise, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on Christ the hope set before them. But, what comfort can that doctrine afford, which leaves all men at uncertainties, whether ever they shall be saved, though Christ died for them, and they believe in him? Because by his death, as the friends of it say, he established no certainty of their perseverance and salvation, ratified no absolute promises, did not procure them persevering grace, or that guidance of the Holy Spirit, which shall end in eternal life.

How is the covenant order'd in all things and sure? What consolation can he draw from it, who, though he may plead the gracious promises of it to day, may be excluded from all interest in them to morrow, and have no promise to plead for his recovery, nor any reason to hope, that that blood, which he says was shed for him, shall do any thing else, but plead against him, as one trampling it underfoot? Whereas upon the foot of particular redemption there is room to expect, that where the gospel comes, some, it may be many, will be brought home to Christ by it; for all that the Father hath given him shall come, and if they fall they shall rise again: The promises are sealed and sure; effectual grace and eternal glory are purchased for them; Christ loves their
per-

persons, and will not permit any of them to perish; he pleads his death for them, undertakes to protect and guide them by his Spirit, till he has brought them safe to glory: Though they see no worthiness in themselves, yet they may plead his special love to them, and his giving himself for them, not only to make their salvation possible but certain, and thus he has given them everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace.

If we tell a man in distress and anguish of spirit, for his reigning impenitency and unbelief, that Christ died for him, seeing he died for all men, and therefore he may be of good comfort, how easily may he reply, be it so, that Christ died for all men, and so for me, yet I may perish as well as Cain and Judas: If Christ made my salvation possible by his death, yet I may make my damnation certain by my unbelief. What will it profit me, that Christ died for me, if my own treacherous, unbelieving heart shuts me out from salvation? I do not perceive, that he purchased either grace or glory for me; but I am left to my own free will, which I find set against divine things, and bent upon what is evil: I have no absolute promises to plead, no assurance that Christ procured the Holy Spirit to help such as I am, or that Christ loved any man living better than thou-

sands, whom he left to perish in their sins; of what advantage then is it to tell me, that Christ died for me and all men? If Christ had been a propitiation for my unbelief, as well as my other sins, I might have entertain'd some hope, that I should have been deliver'd from it; but now tho' Christ died for all men I may perish in my unbelief, as inevitably as if he had died for no man.

This I take to be a just representation of the case; and surely it is not hard to infer from what has been said, that the doctrine of Christ's dying for some men, to secure to them grace and glory, affords more solid comfort than the pretence that he died alike for all, to render their salvation barely possible, but purchased for them by his death neither grace nor glory, but left them to shift for themselves, to get faith and preserve it, if they could, or else to perish, as millions have done before them.

THE APPLICATION.

I. If Christ has render'd the salvation of his people certain, he must needs be a mighty and powerful Redeemer. The scripture has assured us, that God laid help upon one who is mighty^y; and the

^y Psalm lxxxix. 19.

most High is introduced speaking thus, ² “behold my servant, whom I uphold; he shall not fail, nor be discouraged.” It would be unbecoming the wisdom and faithfulness of God, to give the character of a Saviour to an insufficient person. Redemption is the glory of all his works, but it would have been the disgrace of them, if he had appointed a person to redeem us, who was unable to do it, and who had fail’d in the performance; for then the chosen seed had been lost, the design of his love had been disappointed, the sun of righteousness had set in an everlasting cloud of darkness, and the wisdom and truth of God had suffer’d an eclipse. Seeing then God has chose Christ to save men, and has proposed him as a sufficient Redeemer, we may conclude, he is such an one; for the infinitely wise and good God would never have made choice of one, who was not equal to an undertaking, upon which his honour, and man’s happiness so much depended.

We cannot doubt of Christ’s ability to save, if we consider his person and qualifications. In his person he is God-man, God manifested in the flesh; all the perfections of God, and all the capacities of man meet in him. Hence he was capable

² Isa. xlii. 1, 4.

of obedience and sufferings as man, and of bearing the weight of vengeance, as his divine power supported the human nature. As man he could be humbled, crucify'd, and buried; as God he could raise himself from the dead, fill all things, convert the elect, confound the wicked, triumph over Satan, and bring many sons to glory. The church is taught to place her confidence in this, that her Saviour is God; not a made God, but the Lord Jehovah: hence she could say, ^a "I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is become my strength, and my song." If the eternal God cannot be a refuge, and if his everlasting arms cannot uphold us, who shall? where is salvation to be had, if not in him in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and who has all power in heaven and earth? When Christ's human nature was form'd in the womb of the Virgin, the power of the highest overshadowed her, not only so as to produce that nature in an extraordinary manner, but also, so as that the Son was for ever closely united with it, from the first moment wherein the humanity did exist. Viewing the Redeemer in this light, we may well conclude that he is mighty to save. It is therefore very good advice

^a Isa. xii. 2.

which is given us, to trust in the Lord for ever ; ^b for in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength. We may say of our Saviour, as Job once said, ^c “ I know that thou canst do every thing : ” he can do every thing consistent with the glory of God, and the counsels of his will.

Christ fulfilled the law, suffered its curse, proved his divine mission by miracles, and manifested his Deity in his resurrection : he made an end of sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness, enlightened many dark minds, bowed many stubborn wills, sanctify'd many impure minds, gave them first grace, and then glory. Christ even when he was suffering in weakness, seem'd to yeild to the malice of his enemies, and was dying under his Father's vengeance ; yet to make it evident, that he was able to save, put forth an act of his almighty power, upon the heart of one who was dying with him, and first made him willing in the day of his power, and then carried him up to his celestial palace. ^d “ This day, said he to the converted thief, shalt thou be with me in paradise.” The consideration of the time, place, and circumstances of this conversion, tends much to illustrate Christ's saving power. Satan was now gaping upon

^b Isa. xxvi. 4. ^c Job xlii. 2. ^d Luke xxiii. 43.

the prey, just ready to devour the poor thief, who was dying in all his guilt and wickedness: one Evangelist tells us, “that they that were crucified with Christ reviled him;” tho’ another says, “that one of the malefactors railed on him, but the other rebuked him.” These two accounts may be thus reconciled: When the malefactors were first nailed to the cross, they both of them spit out the venom of their wicked hearts against Christ, but in a little time, one of them begun to relent: he felt a divine power from the dying Jesus coming upon him, which opened his eyes, changed his heart, caused him to rebuke his fellow-sufferer, to pray to his dying Saviour, and to believe and own his sovereignty and kingdom; and that when both the Saviour and the saved were in the agonies of death: this was a wonderful instance and evidence of Christ’s saving power. Whilst Christ was in this world, the winds and the seas obey’d him; his enemies fell at his feet, and licked the dust when he pleased; the devils fled before him; many believed in him, to the saving of their souls: all which makes it very plain and evident that Christ was mighty to save, a sufficient Saviour.

^e Mark xv. 32. ^f Luke xxiii. 39, 40.

Christ invites all the weary and heavy laden to come to him for rest; which shews his ability to save all such as come to God by him. Was there any guilt which a redeemed soul could contract, any power of sin in such an one, which Christ could not expiate and subdue, his invitation would be all delusion. It is necessarily imply'd, and supposed in the invitation, that Christ is able to save every soul that is enabled to comply with it. Christ's ability to save is abundantly declared in the scriptures; ^g "is my hand, says Christ, shortened at all, that it cannot redeem; or have I no power to deliver?" ^h "who will contend with me, let us stand together." There is no opposing the Redeemer, ⁱ "he takes away the captives of the mighty, and the prey of the terrible, for the Saviour is the mighty one of Jacob;" ^k "Satan the prince of this world is spoiled, judged, and cast out:" ^l "The hand-writing that was against us, which was contrary to us, is taken away, Christ has nail'd it to his cross: he redeem'd his people from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them: ^m "he has abolished death, and swallowed it up in victory, and brought life and immor-

^g Isa. l. 4. ^h Ver. 8, 9. ⁱ Isa. xlix. 24, 25. ^k Colof. ii. 15. John xvi. 11. John xii. 31. ^l Colof. ii. 14. Gal. iii. 13. ^m 2 Tim. i. 10.

talities to light :” ⁿ “ he is the life, the eternal life, his people reign in life by him :” hence ^o death and hell are said to be cast into the lake of fire. Christ saves all the redeemed from death and misery. The scriptures declare, ^p that there is salvation in no other : ^q “ he is God’s salvation to the end of the earth :” which shews Christ to be a powerful Redeemer indeed. The promises are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus ; they are all confirm’d by him ; the promised grace and glory are purchas’d, and shall be apply’d by him ; and therefore he is a mighty Saviour. It is easy to cite a great number of particular promises, relating to the several parts of our salvation, but I shall content my self with one or two, wherein the Holy Ghost has sum’d up all the rest ; ^r “ this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life ; this is the record that God has given us, eternal life ; and this is in his Son.” But in vain were such comprehensive promises made, if Christ was not able to fulfill and make them good. God has promised that ^s “ Israel shall be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation.” Christ then is not only able to repulse the enemy once for a little time, but to secure his

ⁿ 1 Cor. xv. 54. ^o Rev. xx. 14. ^p Acts iv. 12. ^q Isa. xlix. 6. ^r 1 John ii. 25. Ver. 11. ^s Isa. xlv. 17.

redeemed for ever ; so ^t as the enemy shall no more exact upon him, or pluck them out of his hand.

Christ's sufficiency for the work of redemption, appears from the dignity to which he is raised in the celestial world. There is a prevailing intercessor with God : some might be apt to think this to be an argument of weakness, but in scripture it is produc'd as a proof of Christ's ability to save : ^u " wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come to God by him, seeing he ever lives in heaven, to make intercession for them." Christ's intercession shews him to be an able Saviour ; for the Father would never have admitted him to plead his merits in heaven, if he had not paid a full price of redemption on earth : his plea is not as a suppliant for mercy, but he pleads law and justice ; and therefore says peremptorily, ^x " Father, I will, that those whom thou hast given me, should be with me, to behold my glory." He well knew that his sacrifice would support his claim ; and his life in heaven is a glorious evidence of his saving power : so that every christian may, with Job, rejoice in this, ^y " that his Redeemer liveth." This shews that he has satisfy'd justice, conquer'd death, and is able to save us by his

^t Psal. lxxxix. 22. ^u Heb. vii. 25. ^x John xvii. 20.
^y Job xix. 25.

life: the same power by which he rose from the dead, and ascended up into glory, is sufficient to raise us up together with him, and make us sit together with him in the heavenly mansions, ^z which he is gone to prepare for his people. Christ taught his people to build a certain expectation of their eternal life upon his, when he said, ^a “because I live, you shall live also:” he who is our advocate, perfectly understands every case, which he undertakes to plead: he is always heard, because he pleads a merit which is always acceptable to his Father, and he pleads for a happiness which is intirely agreeable to the Father’s purpose and promise; they therefore cannot miss of salvation, who have such an advocate before the throne; he never interceeds in vain; God gives him his heart’s desire, and with-holds not the requests of his lips; he pray’d for Peter, that his faith might not fail, and the effect follow’d; he was recover’d from his sad fall, and enabled to strengthen his brethren: thus the life of Jesus is made manifest in our mortal bodies; we are as dying, and yet behold we live, because Christ ever lives in heaven, to make intercession for us, and so is able to save us to the uttermost from all sin and

^a John xiv. 2. ^z Ibid. ver. 19.

misery, and that for ever. ^bIn the Gospel-glass, we may see Jesus crowned with glory and honour ; which is a convincing evidence, that he has procured eternal salvation for us. It is not once to be thought that God would have given such honours to an imperfect insufficient Saviour ; to what purpose should God have set him over the works of his hands, who was not able to govern and over-rule them all to his own ends ? or why should the redeemed ^cascribe to him glory and honour, as redeeming them to God by his blood ; if he had failed in that work, and had not procured for them a crown of glory that fades not away ? why was the gospel proclaimed, and the converting or comforting Spirit sent down from heaven ? why were all the angels of God required to worship the Saviour, and minister to the heirs of salvation, if the Saviour was impotent, and the salvation of the redeemed either imperfect or uncertain ? if Christ failed in the purchase, why ^dwas he exalted to give repentance and remission of sins ; for surely, he that is able to do this, must be able to save to the uttermost.

In the great day, Christ will raise ^eup all given him by the Father, without letting

^b Heb. ii. 9. ^c Rev. v. 9. ^d Acts v. 31. ^e John vi. 39.

Of Particular Redemption.

any be lost or wanting ; saying to his Father, “here am I, and the children whom thou hast given me ; a glorious church, having neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing ‘:” this will be done with exceeding joy, both on the part of the Father, who chose them, the Son who redeem’d them, the Holy Spirit who sanctify’d them, ministers who espoused them to Christ, and on the part of the redeemed, who enjoy this glorious salvation. Christ’s ability to save, will appear in the clearest light in that day, when ^s “he shall come to be glorified in the saints, and admired in all them that believe.” If we believe the scripture account of these things, there will be no room to question Christ’s power to save. Even such as make light of it now, the last day will reveal it, “when ^h Christ shall appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation ;” all sin being expelled out of the redeemed, and all sorrows removed from them, their bodies being the glorious mansions of more glorious souls, all the saints being joyn’d to Christ, that infinitely more glorious head, good angels adoring the Saviour, and admiring the salvation, and evil angels and men lying under the feet of his vengeance, filled with shame, horror, and eternal confusion.

^f Jude ver. 24. ^s 2 Thess. i. 10. ^h Heb. ix. 28.

Now we see through a glass but darkly, but then the Saviour will appear in all the glory of his saving power.

2. Such as are redeemed, may with admiration think on an all-sufficient redeemer, being appointed to undertake their cause ; for herein regard was had to man's impotency and misery. God had try'd the strength of man, when Adam was in the state of innocency the head of mankind, and the trustee of their felicity, he soon fell, and ruin'd himself and his posterity : therefore it was not fit to intrust our happiness in such a hand again, much less in the hand of a sinful creature. God saw it needful to appoint his own son, to be our Saviour ; he well knew his wisdom, power, faithfulness, and immutability, his love to his glory, and to the happiness of man : he laid him as a sure foundation, a try'd corner-stone, able to bear the weight of the whole building. No less person could either satisfy for sin, or turn a soul from it, raise a body from the grave, or conduct a soul to glory : no man can redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for his soul, nor was it in the power of the chosen seed to deliver themselves from the tyranny of Satan, or the miseries of the present state. Such a Saviour as Christ was therefore necessary for us : God suited the remedy to the dis-

ease ; the strength of the Saviour to the weakness and misery of the sinner : such an high Priest became us, was fit and suitable for us ; impotent and miserable sinners stood in need of a strong and merciful Saviour.

God would have his chosen not barely redeem'd from hell, and brought to heaven, but he would have it done in such a way, as should be most to his own and his Son's honour. The apostle ⁱ speaks of salvation in Christ, with eternal glory ; not barely salvation, but a glorious salvation : a salvation which shall be to the honour of him that contrived it, of him that purchas'd it, of him that apply'd it, and of them who enjoy it. Concerning our Saviour, it is said, ^k " his glory is great in thy salvation, honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him." When Christ was going to suffer, he therefore put up such a prayer as this ; ^l " Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." God provided a mighty Saviour, who was able to retrieve the honour which the first Adam had lost ; he came short of the glory of God, but Christ in all things acted to his own and his Father's glory, both before he died, and since. He was usher'd into the world with the

ⁱ 2 Tim. ii. 10. ^k Psal. xxi. 5. ^l John xvii. i.

songs of angels, resounding, ^m "glory to God in the highest ; and he went out of the world into a state of heavenly glory, where Father and Son are continually praised for this wonderful salvation ; for which reason, among others, heaven may be spoken of as a state of eternal glory.

God resolved in saving men, to destroy sin, and to vanquish Satan. This was a work too great to have been accomplished by any other than one who is almighty. It required the wisdom and the power of a God to make an end of sin, and destroy Satan ; to turn him out of his throne, and to cast his infection out of the soul. Satan was strongly fortify'd, deeply entrench'd in the heart of man ; he was a vigilant and subtle ruler, and not easily expell'd ; he baffled Adam in his state of integrity, and gain'd the throne when he had no friends in the soul beforehand ; how then should a fallen creature be able to turn him out, when a holy creature could not keep him out ? how could human power destroy sin, when it could not prevent its entrance into the heart, and its infecting our whole nature. It was necessary therefore, that this work should be undertaken by one who was infinite in wisdom and power, and so able

^m Luke ii. 14.

to accomplish it. Christ therefore comes forth, walking in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save.

God exercised his infinite love to his chosen, by committing the care of their salvation to Christ: he well knew all the designs of his love were secured by this. The kindness of God appeared in this, that the Saviour whom he appointed, was no weak one, but able to save to the uttermost: his power, grace, wisdom, and merit were all infinite, and therefore poor timorous Christians may safely commit their souls to him, in a way of reliance without being afraid. In his love, and in his pity God saved his people, and carried them all the days of old; and thus he deals with them, at all times, and in the present time. We have a wonderful instance of God's love to his chosen, in his giving his only begotten Son for them. Salvation is not straiten'd in him; the divine love dilates it self in unmeasurable dimensions, in raising up for us such a horn of salvation as Christ is: the mighty God is the prince of peace. A christian can be in no distress, which the mighty Saviour is not able to free him from. Every believer may say, in the highest sense, as Hezekiah did in a lower case, " " I had great bitterness, but thou hast, in love to

" Isa. xxxviii. 17.

my

my soul, delivered it from the pit of corruption, for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back." In Christ the mighty Saviour, all the kind intentions of divine love are accomplished, and therefore ° God from the beginning chose us in Christ, that we should be without blame before him, in love.

3. How great is the folly and misery of all those, who seek to any other but Christ to save them. All the herd of idolaters ^p fly to a refuge of lyes, and pray to a God that cannot save them. In what confusion will they be, who have neglected the mighty Saviour and his great salvation, when God shall say to them, ^q "where are your Gods which you have made you? let them arise, if they can save you, in the time of your trouble." Some say to the works of their own hands, that they are their Gods; and no wonder if when they have exalted a created thing into a God, they degrade God the Saviour into a creature: they see no need of an infinite fund of power or merit in a Saviour, who are so full in themselves; but to all the rout of pagan, romish, and arian idolaters, those words of God may be apply'd, ^r "behold all you that kindle a fire, that compass your selves about with sparks,

° Eph. i. 4. ^p Isa. xlv. 20. ^q Jer. ii. 28. ^r Isa. l. 11.

walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that you have kindled ; this shall you have at my hand, you shall lie down in sorrow. They who slight the mighty Saviour, spoke of in the former part of the chapter, and set up Gods and Saviours of their own, will meet with eternal sorrow and anguish in the end, when they lie down in the grave, and make their bed in hell. How will it rend their hearts with a thousand agonies, when they shall be forced to say, ‘ “the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved;” the reason of which is premised; “they have provoked me to anger with their graven images, with strange vanities.” Is not this the case of such as set up a Saviour, who is neither God nor a creature, as well as of those who worship images, or trust to their own good works to save them.

4. How acceptable should the gospel be, both to them that preach it, and to them that hear it ? every minister who loves the glory of God, and the happiness of men, may be very glad that he has such a message to bring to the people as the angel had, when he said, ‘ “fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for to you is born this day a Saviour,

† Jer. viii. 19, 20. ‡ Luke ii. 10, 11.

which

which is Christ the Lord; " A mighty Saviour, an all-sufficient Saviour, who is able to deliver all who come to God by him, from sin and satan, death and hell. How beautiful should the feet of those be that publish salvation, and say to Zion, " " thy God reigneth." We have lived to see the message and the messengers treated with contempt. What Paul says ^x, is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, some think is not worth their hearing. A Saviour who pursues the designs of distinguishing unchangeable love, and effectually saves all the redeemed, is despised and rejected, but without reason, and at the peril of such as do it; for the despisers must wonder and perish; but the voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous, because the right-hand of the Lord doth valiantly: when ministers are clothed with salvation, the saints should shout aloud for joy.

5. Has Christ render'd certain the salvation of his people, what pleasure and delight may they take in him? Whatever troubles they have in the world, Christ says to them, ^y " be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Have we strong enemies to fight against us? we have a stronger Saviour to fight for us;

^u Isa. lii. 7. ^x 1 Tim. v. 15: ^y John xvi. 33.

Satan and the world are conquer'd enemies, ^z and the weakest believer shall come off more than a conqueror, through him that loved him. Doth our heinous guilt cry strongly against us for condemnation? the Christian should comfort himself in this, that the blood of Christ cries louder in the ears of God for pardon and forgiveness. A believer has abundant reason to rejoice in God his Saviour, not only because there is no other, but also because there is nothing wanting in him. In him there is wisdom for the weak, righteousness for the soul that is ashamed of its own nakedness, sanctification for the polluted, and redemption for those who are waiting for the glorious liberty of the children of God. With what delight then may the believer sit under the shadow, and how sweet may the fruit of this mighty Saviour be unto him?

With what joy might we draw water out of the wells of salvation, what comfort might we receive from the mighty Saviour, could we but live upon him by faith? when the roaring lion utters his voice, when the world rages, when within are fears, and without are fightings, yet what rest and peace might we have in Christ, could we but know ^a whom we have believed, and be persuaded that he

^z Rom. viii. 37.

^a 2 Tim. i. 12.

is able to keep what we have committed to his trust, against the great day? Christ wants no power or will to secure the souls and the salvation of such as by faith commit themselves to him: he is ^b the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit is the comforter of the faithful: he takes of the things of Christ, and comforts the christian with them.

When the poor christian is ready to sink under the burden of the body of sin, he may take comfort in that deliverance from it, which he shall shortly receive from the hand of Christ: when the weak believer is dismay'd with fears, lest the enemies of his salvation should overcome and ruin him; this may quiet him, that all the powers of darkness shall never be able ^c to pluck one lamb out of Christ's bosom, nor the most feeble sheep out of his almighty hand.

When fear and horror shall seize all the christless world, at Christ's second coming, the faithful shall lift up their heads with joy, because their mighty redeemer then comes to compleat their salvation. In the mean time, the christian may take comfort in this, that though there are many changes and disappointments in the world, yet Christ is ever the same; and may say, blessed be God, for blessing me with all

^b Luke ii. 25. ^c John x, 28.

spiritual blessings in Christ, that in him the heirs of promise might have strong consolation. All things in this world will shortly fail us, or we must leave them; but here is the comfort to the christian, that his redeemer lives; though the heavens and earth shall perish, yet Christ is the same; the same in power, merit, wisdom, grace, and glory; and these shall have no end, no change. We have no reason to call in question the compassions of Christ's heart, or the power of his hands: that is a most comfortable promise concerning Christ, which is in Micah's prophecy; ^d "he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God: and they shall abide; for now shall he be great to the ends of the earth." In Christ there is infinite everlasting strength to overcome all his peoples enemies, to remove all their difficulties, and to supply all their wants; the redeemed people therefore shall abide, the gates of hell shall not prevail against them; for their Saviour is great, and shall be so to the ends of the earth; he shall have a growing and a lasting kingdom.

Let us then, when dejections and fears prevail, fix our thoughts upon such scrip-

^d Micah v. 4.

tures, as set forth the power and grace of Christ ; of which this is one : “ the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty, he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love.” If there be no loveliness in us, yet he will take satisfaction in shewing love to us, in saving his poor distressed people: his love is not confin’d within such narrow limits as ours, nor does he want wisdom or power to enable him to do whatever his love inclines him to do for our good.

6. What reason have believers to cast all their care upon Christ, depending upon his ability to save them? Every true christian may say, if Christ’s blood is not sufficient to cleanse away my guilt, or his wisdom and power great enough to chase away mine enemies, or his love strong enough to do both for me, then I am content to perish ; but I know he can, and he will keep what I have committed to his trust : I have reason to trust him ; our fathers did it, and they were deliver’d : I am directed to cast my burden upon him, and he has promised to sustain me : trust you in the Lord for ever, says the prophet^f, and he gave a good reason for it ; for in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength.

^e Zeph. iii. 17.

^f Isa. xxvi. 4.

Of Particular Redemption.

In our passage through this world, to the heavenly Canaan, the church is represented ^s as going up, leaning upon her beloved. Here is our rest, here is our safety; our strength consists in our dependance upon the strong and mighty Saviour; we are strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Let us then make this use of Christ's strength, ability to save, even to trust in him, resigning ourselves to him, and depending upon him; to do in us, with us, and for us whatever may be for his glory and our salvation. Paul in his conflict fled to Christ, and found present help: he said to him, ^h "my grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness." The less strength the christian has, the more Christ will exert his power.

7. How inexcusable will unbelievers be another day! Christ is a most suitable engaging object of faith: what is there in him to create a distrust? what is there not in him that may encourage a dependance? He has all the qualifications necessary to enable him to save his friends, and destroy their enemies, there's no want of wisdom, grace, merit, or power in him; he is most inviolably faithful in his engagements, and in all his declarations. There

^s Cant. viii. 5.

^h 2 Cor. xii. 9.

is, therefore, good reason to believe the scripture account of him, to rest and rely by faith upon him ; and they who refuse to do it, where the gospel comes, will aggravate their condemnation thereby. It is true, they could not believe of themselves, but it is as true, that they of themselves put forth positive acts of distrust of Christ, think him to be false, and reckon salvation a fiction.

8. How dear and precious should Christ be to all christians ? he has done great things for us, he is doing great things for us, and he will yet do greater things for us. How should we endeavour to exalt him, to magnify him, both in life and death. The mighty Saviour can never be too highly esteem'd, or too highly extolled by us. God has said, he shall be exalted, and be very high : let us then grow in our esteem of him, he is fairer than the sons of men. The Saviour and his salvation will appear glorious, when all the glory of the world will be turn'd into darkness and horror ; and when Christ appears, the saints shall appear with him in glory : this thought should raise our affections, and inflame our love to Christ. Every redeemed soul should say, " my soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour : he is my Lord, and I will exalt him ; he is the chiefest
of

of ten thousand, and altogether lovely:” he fulfills the Father’s decrees, glorifies all the divine perfections, destroys all God’s implacable enemies, and brings all the chosen seed to glory ; not one shall be wanting, nor the least spot or imperfection shall be found in any of them. How glorious is Christ in this appearance; the object of the Father’s love, and therefore he deserves ours. Let us love the Lord then, let him be very dear to our souls, who is thus glorious in his apparel, walking in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save.

9. We may learn what a glorious church the great Saviour will have, when all the saints are gather’d together in one. The general assembly, and church of the first-born will make no mean appearance in the great day. If three thousand were added to the church in one day, and multitudes soon after, what a vast congregation will all the saved make, when they meet together at Christ’s right-hand? It will then be seen, that he did not labour in vain, and die for nought: the redeemed will appear to be a number, that no man can number, out of all times, kindreds, and nations; which will be a full evidence, that our Redeemer has not left the salvation of his people uncertain.

10. What reason have all the redeemed to admire and honour the sovereign saving grace of God and Christ? Peter said thus to the Christians to whom he wrote, ⁱ “you are a chosen nation, a peculiar people, that you should shew forth his praise, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” A christian may say; how is it, Lord, that thou shouldest love and redeem me, give thy self for me, and then reveal thy self to me, pour out thy blood upon the cross, and pour out thy Spirit into the heart of such a worthless worm as I? Lord, why did not I as well as others, receive the just wages of my sins? why did my Saviour pay my debt, when so many others, fallen angels and men, must be paying theirs for ever? O glorious, sovereign, distinguishing grace! not to me, not to me, but to thy name be all the glory: peculiar love calls for special thankfulness. I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that whilst this salvation is hid from others, it is revealed to me; and that I have been enabled to receive the atonement, and to joy in thee through Jesus Christ my Lord. This is a thank-offering which becomes all the redeemed, but it will be done infinitely better, when the saints come to

ⁱ 1 Pet. ii. 9.

sing the song of the Lamb in the new Jerusalem, according to this model of it ;
 * “thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation.” Those who stand with Christ upon ¹ mount Sion, having his Father’s name written on their foreheads, who are redeemed from the earth, should often sing that song, which none but they can learn, who are the redeemed from among men, and are the first fruits to God, and to the Lamb. But not only good words and good affections are to be given to their God and Saviour ; but the redeemed peculiar people, ought to be zealous of good works. Those who are bought with such an invaluable price, as Christ’s blood, ought to glorify him in their bodies and spirits: his love, as well as his authority and right, should constrain us, not to live to our selves, but to him that died for us, and rose again.

II. What encouragement is there for us to wait for salvation by Christ, to lie at his foot, and hope in his mercy ? The saved are a numberless number, sinners of all ages, sizes, and circumstances: The Saviour, set forth in the gospel, is able to save, to the uttermost, all who come

* Rev. v. 9.

¹ Rev. xiv. ver. 1, and 5.

to God by him. Those who are left to their own wills perish; God works a work which they in no wise believe; they will not come to Christ, that they may have life; but those committed to the care of Christ shall come: he makes them willing in the day of his power, by his word and Spirit, and the pastoral rod of his strength. It is good then to wait at wisdom's gates; for such as find Christ, find life. There is encouragement to hope for mercy, if we wait for it, in the way which Christ has prescribed: He has said, "Seek and you shall find; search the scriptures, they testify of me; come to me all you that are weary, and I will give you rest." The Psalmist uses an argument which is grown much stronger since his time; "Our fathers trusted in thee, and they were delivered ^m." We may say not only the patriarchs and prophets, but the apostles, the primitive church, and multitudes down to this present time, have trusted in Christ, and have been saved by him; therefore it is good for us to wait and hope for the salvation of the Lord. It is our business to prove our election and redemption by our effectual calling. If we believe, we shall be saved; if we never do, then there is no salvation for us. It is a great encou-

^m Psalm xxii. 4.

agement that there is a Saviour, infinite in grace and merit, who will give the water of life freely, to every one that thirsts; and we have as fair an opportunity as thousands before us, who ventured their souls on Christ, and were kindly received by him.

12. Let us not sink under the greatest discouragements which we meet with in the course of providence. Valuable and useful instruments are taken away, or laid aside; faithful and able ministers die, but Christ lives still; and blessed be the rock of our salvation. Christ is mighty to save, and with him is the residue of the Spirit: It is he that made those who are gone what they were, and he can give the same Spirit and gifts to others, or work the same effects, by less able and likely means. We should then cry to the Lord God of Elijah, to pour out more of his Spirit on his ministers and people, that salvation work may be carried on, not by human might and power, but by the Spirit of the Lord. Christ has promised to be with his ministers and people to the end of the world, if they teach and do what he has commandedⁿ: Let us then, in his own way, depend upon his promise, and wait for his blessing, who walks in the greatness of

ⁿ Matt. xxviii, 20.

his strength, and is mighty to save; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Now to him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory, to our exceeding joy; to the only wise God, our Saviour Jesus Christ, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.

The End of the FIRST VOLUME.





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ADVERTISEMENT
TO THE
READER
WITH RELATION TO
Mr. HURRION's four Sermons.



THE two first of the Sermons of the late learned and excellent Mr. HURRION, were preached at the same Lecture, in which those of others, which precede them in this Volume, were deliver'd. As he had not time to go through this subject, he design'd, before that exercise was closed, to have preached two more, but was hinder'd

der'd by illness. When this work came to be printed, he was desired to add the Sermons he purposed to have preached. Being a little revived, he transcribed the two first Sermons, towards the end of last November: After that, he grew much worse than he had been; but his desire to finish this subject, carried him beyond what his strength might have been thought to have admitted. He purposed to insert in the remaining Discourses some materials which he had by him: with great difficulty he transcribed the third Discourse; which he sent me, with a letter, dated the fourteenth of December, which was as follows: "I have just finished, and now send you, my third Sermon: I shall go on with the fourth, as fast as I can; if possible, I would finish it next week, but, I fear, I shall not be able, I have been so much worse, since I wrote to you last. I would desire you to take care of my poor copy, and use freedom in correcting what mistakes I may have been guilty of. It is no wonder to find such in my performances, at any time, and especially now, so ill am I, and so often taken off from my work by great pains. Pray for me, that I may have grace sufficient for me; and that whether I live or die, I may be the Lord's, and to the praise of his glorious grace." When I came to look over the Discourse, I was
amazed,

amazed, that when unwieldiness of body increased so much upon him, and when he was under such a faint distemper as the dropfy, he should have vigour of mind to draw up such a performance ; which, for vivacity and closeness of thought, strength of argument, and clearness of style, is not in the least inferior to any of his other works. It was very little above a fortnight after that he rested from his labours ; for, on the thirty first day of the above mentioned month, he sweetly slept in Jesus : So that it may be said, that he composed the Sermon while he struggled with death, and that it contains some of the last thoughts of an eminent saint, who, a few days after it was finished, began to ascribe, in the upper world, salvation, and power, and glory, to the Redeemer, the certain efficacy of whose death he so well defended. To him may be applied the following verses ^a of Mr. Waller.

Wrestling with death, these lines he could indite ;
 No other theme could give his soul delight.
 The soul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,
 Lets in new light, thro' chinks that time has made :
 Stronger by weakness, wiser men become,
 As they draw near to their eternal home :
 Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
 Who stand upon the threshold of the new.

^a Pag. 305, 317. of Fenton's Edition.

He had begun to transcribe his fourth Sermon; but illness increasing, he was soon forced to give over. He proposed, in the beginning of it, to consider the allegations of the friends of universal redemption, from a set of scriptures, which speak of Christ's dying for those that perish; but he only set down the following paragraphs, which were, I believe, the last lines that came from his pen.

“ Our opponents shrewdly argue, that if Christ died for them that perish, and for them that do not perish, then he died for all: But this is illogical and fallacious; for Christ might die for some that perish, and for all who are saved, and yet not die for all men. From a particular to an universal, the argument will not hold, by the rules of reason: If the premises are not universal, the conclusion cannot justly be so; but let us attend to the particular scriptures.

The apostle Paul says, “ Through thy knowledge, shall thy weak brother perish, for whom Christ died ^b.” Our blessed ^c Saviour affirm'd, that his sheep hear his voice, and follow him, and that he gives them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of

^b 1 Cor. viii. 11.

^c John x. 28.

his hand : If this is true, (and who will dare to be guilty of such blasphemy, as to say it is not?) then either by the weak "brother," in the former text, must be meant not one of Christ's real sheep, or else his perishing cannot be understood of eternal damnation : Both the context, and the scripture forms of speech elsewhere, seem to favour this last sense ; and therefore the ^d apostle explained this causing him to perish, by defiling and wounding his weak conscience, and making him offend.

I was unwilling this work should be imperfect, therefore, as I knew what papers he intended to transcribe, I have added his answers to some objections, which he had not meddled with before : He gave me some directions, about this, several months ago, when he did not think he should be able to do any thing himself. I have not made any alterations, as indeed there was no need to make any, only I have ranged the heads in such a method, as may answer the preceding part. I am not certain whether he would have added so large an application, but as it is not foreign to the subject, and is very well worth perusal, I have given it as I found it. Had these

^d 1 Cor. viii. 7, 12.

papers received the author's last hand, it is not to be question'd, but that he would have made many useful additions to them; but, taking them in the condition in which they are, there is no manner of need to make any excuse for publishing them.

The worthy person, who is now enter'd into his Master's joy, used to call this head of divinity, which relates to the extent of Christ's redemption, one of his favourite subjects. He had well studied it, and he took pleasure to be upon it. When he was brought very low, and had the sentence of death within himself, he begun the latter part of his undertaking with these remarkable words: "The death of Christ being the fountain of our life, there is nothing more necessary, pleasant, or useful to the Christian, than a right apprehension and remembrance of it." The delight which he took in the subject, carried him above his great pain and weakness. This was one of the great doctrines which he had preached, in the firm belief of which he died, and in which he found more sweetness, in his last sickness, than he had ever done. I confess, I have had a great deal of pleasure in perusing and revising these discourses for the press; and I heartily wish, that they may be, by the divine blessing, made useful

ful and beneficial to such as may read them, and may be of service to guard Christians against the absurd notion of universal redemption, the evident tendency of which is to represent Christ as dying in vain.

March 1,
1734.

A. TAYLOR.

F I N I S.



